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THE  
BRITISH NORTHWEST.

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PEN AND SUN SKETCHES

IN THE

CANADIAN WHEAT LANDS.

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The Illustrations from Photographs taken upon  
the Spot.

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ST. PAUL:  
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## CONTENTS.

### I.

	PAGE.
A PRAIRIE EMPIRE - - - - -	1

Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Its Changed Relations—The Gateway to a Newly Opened World—A Political and Commercial Awakening—Extent and Character of the Canadian Dominions in the Northwest—250,000,000 Acres of the Best Wheat Lands in the World, Unoccupied and Idle—Testimony as to Climate and Fertility of Soil—Mineral Resources—Rivers and Lakes.

### II.

THE PRAIRIE PROVINCE - - - - -	10
--------------------------------	----

Manitoba and Its Capital—Their Romantic History and Magic New Growth—Winnipeg's Population Multiplied Ten-Fold in Ten Years—Impressions of the New City—Emigration, Present and Future—The First Wash of the Human Wave—The Growth of a Political State Out of a Trade Colony—The Hudson Bay Company—Its Past and Present.

### III.

DOWN LAKE WINNIPEG - - - - -	18
------------------------------	----

Six Hundred Miles in a Hudson Bay Steamer—The Lower Red River and Its Swamps—Lake Winnipeg, Its Shores and Waters—Running the Grand Rapid of the Saskatchewan—The Paradise of Pot Fishermen—A Characteristic Hudson Bay Trading Post.

## IV.

	PAGE.
UP LAKE WINNIPEG - - - - -	28

The Saskatchewan River and Valley and Its Resources — Agricultural Wonders of the Peace River Country — Mineral Wealth of the Upper Saskatchewan — Manufacturing Capabilities of the Grand Rapid — Nelson River, Its Past and Future — The Shortest Ocean Route to Europe — The East Side of the Lake — Red River and Its Cultivated Shores Above Selkirk.

## V.

THE LAKE OF THE WOODS - - - - -	36
---------------------------------	----

A Region of Rocks, Woods and Waters — Old and New Routes Across the Laurentian Belt — The Thunder Bay Section of the Canadian Pacific — Geological Formations — Engineering Difficulties — A Spectral Journey — Floating Among a Thousand Islands — Mineral, Manufacturing and Timber Resources of the Country.

## VI.

THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY - - - - -	47
--	----

The Point About which the New Northwest Turns — Private Enterprise Bringing Order out of Chaos of Government Mismanagement — History of Efforts to Build a Railroad Across Canada, Ending in the Formation of the Montreal Syndicate — Terms of the Contract with the Government — Organization of the Company and Beginning of the Work.

## VII.

THE PRAIRIE JOURNEY BEGUN - - - - -	55
-------------------------------------	----

By Rail Westward to the End of the Track — The Beginning of a Five Hundred Mile Trip by Wagon — Across the Settled Section of the Assinniboine Valley to Brandon — Pioneer Experiences and Profits — The Westward March of Emigration — Prairies, Marshes and Sand Hills.

## CONTENTS.

iii

## VIII.

PAGE.

## THE UPPER ASSINNIBOINE VALLEY - - - - 64

The Magic Town of Brandon — A City Born on the Prairie in a Night — Its Appearance at Eight Weeks Old — The Ride up the Valley to Fort Ellice — Soil, Mosquitoes and Freighters' Carts — Ellice and Its Beautiful Situation — Future Growth of Timber on the Prairies — Settlements North of the River.

## IX.

## THE VALLEY OF THE QU 'APPELLE - - - - 73

Through Storm and Desert, to a Sunny Prairie Paradise — A Wet Day and Night — A Hundred Miles of Rich Farming Land Waiting for the Plow — The Post at Qu 'Appelle — A Beautiful Valley and Rosary of Sparkling Lakes — Sitting Bull's Last Camp.

## X.

## RETROGRADE MOVEMENTS - - - - 79

The Return Journey to Winnipeg — A Startling and Deadly Storm — Hearsay Evidence as to Parts of the Prairie Empire not Personally Visited — The Future Cattle Ranges of Canada — An Important Announcement — Branch Lines to be Surveyed by the Syndicate, Opening the Saskatchewan Valley and the Souris Coal Fields — Promise of the Latter.



The following chapters are recast, with only the most obviously necessary changes, from a series of letters printed in the Pioneer Press newspaper of St. Paul, Minnesota, in the midsummer of 1881. Their only aim is to reflect some of the impressions crowded into a hurried journey, and they make no claim to a greater degree of historical and scientific accuracy, or to profounder reflection, than it is customary to look for in the columns of a daily journal. The illustrations are from photographs taken by Mr. F. Jay Haynes, of Fargo, Dakota, who accompanied the writer with a field camera upon the excursions described. It is proper to remark that the whole trip was made in five weeks.

ST. PAUL, August, 1881.



# The British Northwest.

## I.

### A PRAIRIE EMPIRE.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, AND ITS CHANGED RELATIONS — THE GATEWAY TO A NEWLY OPENED WORLD — A POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL AWAKENING — EXTENT AND CHARACTER OF THE CANADIAN DOMINIONS IN THE NORTHWEST — 250,000,000 ACRES OF THE BEST WHEAT LANDS IN THE WORLD UNOCCUPIED AND IDLE — TESTIMONY AS TO CLIMATE AND FERTILITY OF SOIL — MINERAL RESOURCES — RIVERS AND LAKES.

The queer old capital of Lord Selkirk's queer old Scotch colony has changed most miraculously in its relations to the universe since the Canadian confederation planted a political state in the heart of the old northwestern wilderness, and the Canadian Pacific opened a new commercial empire to settlement and improvement. Ten years ago Winnipeg was the end of the settled domain in the northwest, the ultima thule of civilization — the jumping off place of emigration. To-day it is the gateway of a new empire, vaster, richer and more varied than any ever opened to the human race by a single step of political or commercial progress since the landing of the first English colonists upon the Atlantic coast. From a jumping off place Winnipeg has become a starting point. From the end of civilization, Winnipeg has become the beginning of a new civilization ; the political gateway and the commercial entrepot of a new empire vaster than the American republic in the first half century of its existence, and riper for settlement than any unoccupied domain in the western

world. From a cul-de-sac of travel, a blind alley of progress, Winnipeg has suddenly became an open window through which one looks, an open door through which one enters a domain of undreamed of beauty and fertility, covering nearly a quarter of the North American continent, and embracing within its vast expanse prairies wide and rich enough to yield the grain supply of the world; magnificent rivers, the longest on the continent after the Mississippi and Missouri, large and deep enough to float navies, and stores of mineral wealth whose undeveloped capabilities the boldest imagination almost hesitate to grasp. In this new relation, Winnipeg and Province of Manitoba, with all their historic interest and wonders of fresh, new growth, shrink under the eyes of the beholder in comparison with the vast regions stretching out before him in the north and west. The traveler of ten years ago saw Winnipeg and the Red River settlements with a certain curious interest, and turned his back upon them, blind to the wide domain of future empire beyond, hidden from him in the darkness of semi-barbarism and baleful trade monopoly. The traveler of to-day almost overlooks Winnipeg and the Red River settlements, albeit grown ten fold in area and population, as well as in political stature, in his astonished contemplation of the new empire beyond, which the political and commercial progress of the same ten years has redeemed from barbarism and opened as homes to the swarming millions from the older parts of the earth. Let me follow this natural impulse and postpone the usual tourists' observations upon Winnipeg and the surroundings until I try to give you some feeble and fragmentary notion of the New Northwest, to which it is the gateway.

The schoolboys' atlas gives the political boundaries of British America, but these are by no means those of the New Northwest, in the sense of the settler and husbandman. Nature has drawn narrower bounds than surveyors and treaty makers, and the habitable territory of Western British America, vast as it is, is hardly half of the land marked upon the maps. Beginning with the height of land north of the west end of Lake Superior, and stretching away northwestward to the Arctic ocean are the low ranges of the westward extension of the Laurentian hills, the oldest rock exposure in America. West of these, in a wide Silurian outcrop, lie also, in a northwestern chain, the great lakes

of British America—Lake of the Woods, Winnipeg, Athabaska and Great Slave Lake. The shores of these lakes and a strip of country to the westward of them, widening rapidly to the north, are covered with inhospitable rocks, desolate Arctic forests and fathomless swamps. This region is most familiar north of Lake Superior and on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, but it has been traced to Churchill river, and certainly preserves the same character to Athabaska and beyond. But it forms the boundary eastward of a region of spreading prairies or rolling plains, and wooded river valleys, stretching from the Lake of the Woods 1,200 miles west to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and from the international boundary as far north as Peace River valley, 48° north latitude. Throughout this whole region the rocks are Cretaceous, and most of the surface alluvial deposit. The southeastern part has suffered extensive denudation by ice, leaving isolated escarpments, like the Pembina, Duck, Riding and Turtle Mountains, and making place for marvelously fertile and inexhaustible alluvial prairies of the Red and Assiniboine valleys. West of these and between the international boundary and the line of the Qu'Appelle and South Saskatchewan, the plains are higher and dryer, and, like those of the Missouri valley, in the United States, have been called arid and uninhabitable. But the enterprising farmers along the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad are raising splendid wheat in the country pronounced by Gen. Hazen, Prof. Powell and Prof. Henry, unfit to sustain animal or vegetable life, and it will do to suspend judgment upon the fitness of the arid plains north of the boundary to sustain a population until the present promising experiment is concluded in the south. Certainly the northern section enjoys the advantage of a lower elevation and more ready accessibility to the warm and moisture-bearing winds from the Pacific.

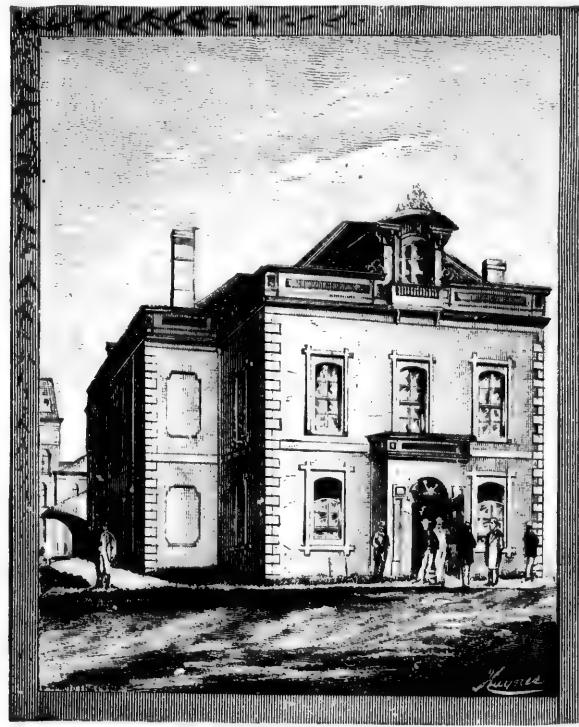
There is no room for doubt of the character of the belt of country north of this. It is the fertile belt of the North Saskatchewan, stretching from the Red River country to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, embracing 250,000,000 acres of rich agricultural lands, and capable of sustaining a population of millions of people. North of the Saskatchewan belt is the wooded country, extending back to the chain of northern lakes, unfit for cultivation, but capable of supplying timber for a continent. At its

west extremity the fertile belt of the Saskatchewan spreads out both north and south, covering on the one side the foot hills of the Rocky Mountains, and extending on the other, after an interval of rough country about the head waters of the Athabaska, into the fertile valley of the Peace River. This Peace River country is the wonder of the northwest. It has rarely been visited except by missionaries and travelers, but Archbishop Tache, of St. Boniface, has borne testimony to its fertility, and the narration of Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle, who penetrated the Rocky Mountains, through the channel cut by the Peace, testifies to the fertility of the lower as well as the perils of the upper river. The Peace is a magnificent stream, broad, deep and swift, navigable for its entire length west of the mountains, that breaks through the rocky chain about  $56^{\circ}$  north latitude, and flows northeast to the Athabaska. The mild climate and fertile soil of its valley are among the favorite traditions of the northwest. It is directly exposed to the warm winds of the Pacific that blow westward through the passes of the mountains and elevate the mean annual temperature of the whole region at the foot of the Rockies. The climate is said to be as mild, and the seasons as early as in the Red River valley. Vegetation is said to be well advanced there by the middle of May. The best sample of wheat I was shown in Winnipeg, was some Scotch Fife from Fort Vermillion, on the Peace River, at nearly  $60^{\circ}$  north latitude, 1,500 miles northwest from Fort Garry. It was equal in appearance with Minnesota hard, and weighed sixty-eight pounds to the bushel.

This country, whose outlines I have roughly sketched, is nearly equal in extent to the United States west of the Mississippi River. From the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains is as far as from the Atlantic coast to the Mississippi, and from Emerson, on the International boundary, to Fort Vermillion, is as far as from Chicago to Florida. It is estimated that the fertile belt alone, excluding the plains in the southwest whose character is yet doubtful, contains 250,000,000 acres of lands fit for the cultivation of grain, or five times as much as the whole area of Minnesota, one of the largest States in the Union. It is probable that this falls far short of the entire territory that will be found fit to sustain a population. Only the merest fraction of the country is yet settled. The Red River settlements, extending a short

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distance above and below Winnipeg, and perhaps too miles up the Assinniboine, comprise nearly the entire occupied part of the Northwestern Provinces. There are small out-lying settlements at Pembina and Turtle Mountain, west of the Red River, and Mennonite establishments near Emerson and Rat Portage. Emigrants now coming into the Northwest mainly seek homes in the settlements west of the river, and follow the line of the railroad



CITY HALL, WINNIPEG.

up the Assinniboine Valley. The more accessible lands east of the Red River, though of exhaustless fertility, have been found too wet for cultivation without drainage. Their main use at present is as hay meadows.

These small and experimental settlements have demonstrated the capabilities of the country as the seat of an agricultural

population and pointed out its advantages and disadvantages. The Northwest Provinces are, above all, a cereal growing region. In agreement with the known formula that wheat is produced in the greatest abundance and perfection in the highest latitudes that permit it to come to maturity, the Province of Manitoba produces the best wheat known to the American markets, with an average yield per acre of thirty or forty bushels. Oats and barley yield in proportion. Indian corn cannot be successfully raised, though root crops and grass grow in perfection, and yield enormously. Potatoes of the best quality are produced at an average of 400 bushels to the acre. The ease with which hay and root crops are grown seems to point out a possibility of sufficiently diversifying the agriculture of the country by stock raising. Cattle are raised in considerable quantity about Manitoba, and the wooded country along the Saskatchewan and the high plains farther south are said to be admirably adapted to grazing upon a large scale.

It is fully believed and confirmed by the reports of explorers that the conditions of agricultural production in Manitoba exist over the greater part of the region above described, and those in many localities are even more favorable. The climate in the Province is that characteristic of a sheltered interior region in a high latitude. The winter is long, steady, with little snow and severe frost, and the summer short, warm and bright. Germination is rapid and harvest early. Wheat is sown towards the end of April, and harvesting finished about the middle of September. The mean yearly temperature at Winnipeg ranges about  $32^{\circ}$ , with a range from highest to lowest in five years from  $43^{\circ}$  to  $99^{\circ}$ . These climatic conditions are hardly changed for 1,500 miles to the Northwest. West of the Red River the isothermal lines take a sharp turn to the northward, and the climate of Peace River Valley, in latitude  $56^{\circ}$  to  $58^{\circ}$ , is scarcely severer than at Fort Garry. Probably a much lower mean temperature prevails in the rocky and wooded region west of the lakes, and on the high plains north of the boundary; but the Saskatchewan Valley, the region at the foot of the mountains and the Peace River country, is said to be milder than the Red River Valley, and better adapted to support animal and vegetable life. There are two reasons for this apparently contradictory climatic condition; the low general

elevation of the country between the Rocky Mountains and the Red River, and the exposure of its western portion to the warm moist winds which find their way from the Pacific Ocean through the low passes of the narrowed chain of the Rocky Mountains, without being dried and chilled by passing over broad elevated plateaus. A glance at the map, aided by a few figures, points out how the plains of British America descend from the high Missouri plateau on the one side and the Rocky Mountains on the other. Edmonton, on the Upper Saskatchewan, at the very base of the mountains, is only 3,000 feet above the sea, about the height of the Missouri plateau 1,000 miles further east. From here the course of the river shows a sharp decline in elevation towards the Arctic and Winnipeg basins. There is a larger and more general decline from the Missouri itself to the north. The Missouri has not a single tributary on its northern side, except the Milk River, which flows nearly parallel with it. All the rivers of the country flow down a rapid slope north and east. The fertile belt of the Saskatchewan and Peace Rivers is the great interior plain of the continent, and its decline in elevation from the Missouri plateau is enough, according to the formula which makes three or four hundred feet of elevation equal to a degree of latitude in its effect upon temperature, to account for a stationary or rising mean temperature from the International boundary to the Peace River, 700 miles north. The elevation of the temperature of the region east of the mountains, by warm winds from the Pacific, is one of the traditions of the country, and it has been confirmed by scientific investigation. Prof. Macoun, the Dominion botanist, found on the Peace River a mean temperature, the same as that of Montreal, and a belt of land 150 by 750 miles as well adapted to wheat raising as Ontario.

The question of fuel naturally connects itself with that of climate, and, in the absence of timber on a great part of the fertile belt, it becomes a serious one for the settler. There are heavy woods north of the Saskatchewan, on the east slope of the mountains, and at some points the banks of its streams are wooded, but by far the greater part of the fertile belt is treeless. In this view the great outcrops of coal on the Upper Saskatchewan, the Peace River, and even upon the Assinniboine become of

great interest. This coal, like that in the Missouri Valley, in Dakota, is unlimited in quantity, but of doubtful quality. It is all of later date than the true coal measures, and is probably unfitted for the more important manufacturing purposes. However, it has long been used for domestic purposes at the trading posts, and it is believed deposits can be found not greatly inferior to the Vancouver's Island coal, which has a considerable commercial value. At any rate, like the Dakota lignite, it is the fuel of the country, and human ingenuity can be trusted to find some way to utilize it. There is plenty of it to waste in experimenting.

Finally, something remains to be said of means and channels of inter-communication between the different parts of this new empire of the Northwest. Nature has been so lavish in the supply of such channels that the delay of human enterprise to supplement them is almost excusable. Starting from Winnipeg as a centre, the Red River, some 300 miles long and navigable for more than half its length, opens an easy road into the United States. The Assinniboine, longer almost than its parent stream, and maintaining its size for half its length, is navigable for 500 miles of its windings west of Winnipeg to Fort Ellice, distant by a straight line some 350 miles from the Red River. The Assinniboine and its tributaries, the Qu'Appelle and Souris, drain a valley twice as long as its navigable course. There are now two or more lines of steamers on both the Red and Assinniboine Rivers, doing a thriving trade with the outlying settlements. North of Winnipeg, the lake for which it is named opens 300 miles of unbroken steamer navigation towards Hudson Bay, which is only cut off by the insurmountable falls and rapids of Nelson River. It is one of the dreams of the future to build a railroad along this river and open a short ocean route for the products of the Northwest, via Hudson Bay, to Europe. West of Lake Winnipeg its magnificent tributary, the Saskatchewan, stretches its royal length 1,500 miles to the Rocky Mountains, and, with its two branches, opens a path to almost every part of the fertile belt. Excepting the Grand Rapid close to its mouth, the Saskatchewan is navigable for 1,200 miles, to Fort Edmonton. The Hudson Bay Company has a line of steamers on both lake and river. Finally, the Peace River, through its broad water-course of 2,000 miles to the Arctic Ocean, though the Athabaska and McKenzie Rivers has

no utility for traffic, opens the only approach to a practicable water route across the mountains westward.

The Canadian Pacific Railroad, in its efforts to supplement natural lines of traffic, has built a road from Lake Superior to Selkirk, on the Red River, except a gap of some 150 miles; from Selkirk south through Winnipeg to meet the American system of roads at the boundary; and westward up the Assinniboine Valley as far as Portage La Prairie, sixty miles on the way across the continent.

The political history of the Northwest country has been uneventful enough. Up to 1869 it was held as private property by the Hudson Bay Company for trading purposes; then was organized into Provinces of the Dominion. What there is to be said on this point can be better embraced in the more eventful, though narrower history of Manitoba.





## II.

### THE PRAIRIE PROVINCE.

MANITOBA AND ITS CAPITAL — THEIR ROMANTIC HISTORY AND MAGIC NEW GROWTH — WINNIPEG'S POPULATION MULTIPLIED TEN FOLD IN TEN YEARS — IMPRESSIONS OF THE NEW CITY — EMIGRATION, PRESENT AND FUTURE — THE FIRST WASH OF THE HUMAN WAVE — THE GROWTH OF A POLITICAL STATE OUT OF A TRADE COLONY — THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY — ITS PAST AND PRESENT.

Manitoba, the Prairie Province, and Winnipeg, its capital, with several changes of proprietorship and vicissitudes of fortune, have had two distinct epochs of history, one about fifty years long, from the grant to Lord Selkirk in 1811 to the formation of the Canadian confederation in 1870; and the second from that event to the present. The first was a long period of torpor and slow growth, crowded with wild adventure and romantic incident, but unmarked by signs of material progress and advancing civilization. The second period has been one of wonderful growth and swift material development. A single branch of semi-barbarian commerce has been succeeded, with the rapidity of a panoramic change, by all the varied industries of a civilized people. A settled political system has succeeded a species of feudal land proprietorship; a city has succeeded a trading post; the province has trebled in population, and its capital has grown ten-fold; railroads have brought emigration and commerce and all the varied pursuits of agriculture; trade and manufactures are crystallizing about a growing center of national life.

Ten years ago Winnipeg awoke from a lethargy of half a century to the vigorous palpitating life of a modern commercial city, almost in a day. Political organization was the magic wand that

first aroused the slumbering community, and it soon brought in its train all the stimulating influences of commerce. The first railway arrived not long after the Confederation, a section of the Canada Pacific, extending east and west from Selkirk, a town some twenty miles north of Winnipeg, but this remained for some time with its ends in the air. Real railway communication came in 1878, when the Pembina branch of the Canada Pacific was built south from Selkirk through Winnipeg to Emerson, on the international boundary, to connect with the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba and the whole American railway system. This was an era in the commercial history of Manitoba; and another came last year, when the same Canadian and American capitalists, whose foresight conceived, and whose skill and energy executed the reorganization of the old St. Paul & Pacific Railway, became, through the bargain of the Dominion government with the syndicate, the projectors and constructors of the Canadian Pacific. The last three years have been full of eras for Manitoba. The Northwest has been dashed along a swift and tumultuous current of development and prosperity, rivaling the rapids of its own rivers.

Winnipeg, as I saw it upon my arrival there in July, 1881, bore upon its municipal countenance obvious marks of the wonderful changes of the last ten years. Indeed the first signs of the great awakening are seen immediately upon entering the Province. Emerson, the first station across the boundary, from a mere customs point, has grown to a prosperous town of regular streets, stores, churches and public buildings, whose importance is apparent even from the railroad crossing on the other side of the river. Between Emerson and Winnipeg there is little evidence of growth and settlement. Along the railroad on the east side of the Red River nearly all the land has been assigned by the Dominion government to the half-breeds of the Fort Garry post. These are ready enough to sell, though they show no disposition to improve their property, but the land is too uniformly low and wet to invite settlement. On the west side of the Red River the land is higher and better, and several important towns are springing up which will shortly be connected with Winnipeg by the Manitoba & Southwestern Railway. Winnipeg, like all the Red River towns in Manitoba, is on the west side of the river

and lies on a level but dry bottom between the Assinniboine, which here joins the Red River from the west, and the main stream. The Pembina branch railway joins the main line from Selkirk, about two miles apparently below the junction of the river, where it crosses the river by a fine iron bridge, which, when completed, will have accommodation for wagon and foot as well as railway passengers. Between the river and the railway depot is abundant room for the Canadian Pacific freight houses and shops of the future. The railroad with the two rivers forms an irregular quadrangle embracing the city on three sides. From the station to Fort Garry, the old Hudson Bay trading post, stretches Main Street, nearly two miles long and lined for the greater part of its course with business blocks, many of them brick and of very imposing appearance. The city slopes off irregularly to the river and prairie on either side in residence streets, that look raw enough for the present, but promise well for the future.

The whole city has a new unfinished look, like the stage of a theatre behind the curtain when a scene is being shifted. The old picturesque landmarks are in course of obliteration, and the new city that is growing up on their ruins has not taken definite form. Fort Garry, the most conspicuous feature in the old town, has been enveloped by new buildings, and the old wall surrounding it has been torn down to furnish material for the foundations of brick blocks. Fine steam mills have arisen on the plateau below, and a substantial iron wagon bridge is spanning the Assinniboine at the very gates of the fort. The prairie west of the fort is taking shape as the popular residence section, and many fine brick dwellings are rising upon the bank of the river and the adjoining plain. All the residence part of the city presents an air of thrift and prosperity, and there is a notable absence of squalid shanties. The public buildings and recent business blocks are solidly built of brick. The only part of the city that retains anything of its ancient aspect is the French Catholic suburb of St. Boniface, across the Red River from the main town. This is the episcopal residence of Bishop Tache, whose authority extends over the whole Northwest, the seat of St. Boniface college, and several associated religious and educational institutions.

The present population of Winnipeg is about 10,000. When Manitoba was taken into the Dominion in 1871, it was only 200 or 300. The growth has been steady since 1871, varying a little from about a thousand per year. With the establishment of the Provincial Government, Dominion land offices and railroad headquarters began disbursements of large sums of public money, which have continued in increasing amount. These have been a



MONTREAL BANK BUILDING, WINNIPEG.

powerful artificial stimulus to the natural growth of the Province, and have increased the population of the city ten fold, while that of Manitoba has increased from 17,000 in 1871 to 40,000 in 1881. The trade of the Province has certainly grown five to ten fold in ten years, though in its chaotic, primitive conditions there is a lack of positive statistics. But the customs duties for

1881 are estimated at between \$300,000 and \$400,000, against some \$67,000 in 1874. The exports arrive by two channels, the Pembina branch railway and Red River, on which five or six lines of steamers ply in the summer months. The interior trade is in the hands of the Hudson Bay Company, which has lines of steamers on Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan, and trading posts scattered over the whole immense region stretching to the Arctic Ocean and the Rocky Mountains, and two private lines of steamers upon the Assinniboine.

Emigration, upon which the future of the Northwest depends, has been steadily increasing since 1871, though as yet it is inconsiderable in comparison with what coming years must bring. The emigration for the present season, about half finished in July, numbered then about 4,000, of whom the commissioner of emigration believes about two-thirds are from Canada, and the rest from Great Britain. So efforts to attract continental emigration have not been successful, except in the case of the Russian Mennonites. The Icelandic colony, established some years ago upon Lake Manitoba, has proved an utter failure, and broken up. I do not consider, from a hasty collection of fragmentary and imperfect statistics from the different land offices, that more than 4,000,000 acres of land in the whole Northwest are sold or taken up. This is scarcely one-fiftieth of the whole amount available. The opening of new land offices, and the enlisting of new corporate interests in the sale of land, will give a great stimulus to emigration and settlement.

Up to the present year, the only method of obtaining lands in the Northwest, except by purchase from settlers or half-breed grantors, has been through the Dominion land office and the Hudson Bay Company; and the latter has not been eager to sell, or enterprising in inviting settlement. Now the Canadian Pacific railroad syndicate has become the proprietor of 25,000,000 acres of land along its lines, which are to be immediately put into the market, and urged upon purchasers by the most modern methods. The syndicate lands, it is said, are to be sold at the maximum government price of \$2.50 per acre, except in certain desirable localities, where a larger price will be demanded. The Hudson Bay Company, which received by the bargain with the Dominion in 1871, two sections in every township, holds its

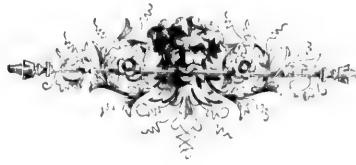
lands at \$3.00 to \$6.00 per acre ; and is doing some thrifty speculation in town lots. Government land can be obtained under homestead and pre-emption laws, similar to those in the United States, except that the conditions of residence, price and time for payment are more favorable. The price of pre-emption lands is \$1.00 per acre outside of railroad limits, and \$2.50 within. Since the advent of the syndicate an active movement in land speculation has begun. Winnipeg is in the throes of a most aggravated real estate boom. Town lots are rapidly changing hands at prices which seem unreal and fictitious, but which tempt the most conservative investor by their steady advance from day to day. While I was in the city business property sold at auction for \$825.00 per foot. The Hudson Bay Company and private speculators are getting fabulous prices for residence lots, platted on what was lately unoccupied prairie. I am told a similar fever of speculation prevails in the new towns along the line of railroad west of there.

The Province of Manitoba has a curious and eventful history, with which its present and future are so closely inter-related as to make a cursory review of it somewhat profitable. It is a part of the vast territory contested at the time of the first settlement upon the Red River, by the rival trading companies consolidated sixty years ago, whose annals embrace those of Manitoba up to its organization as a Province in 1871. The Hudson Bay Company, which exercised the right of absolute domain over nearly half the North American continent until ten years ago, was organized in 1670, under a royal charter, granting it all the lands drained by streams flowing into Hudson Bay, for the purpose of trading with the Indians. For a century and a half the company confined its operations with regions nearest the sea coast ; and, in the last half of the eighteenth century, its proper territory, south and west of Lake Winnipeg, was occupied by French traders from Montreal. These organized, in 1783, the Northwest Trading Company, which became the formidable rival of the Hudson Bay Company, though it possessed no territorial or chartered rights. In 1811 Lord Selkirk, an enterprising but visionary Scotch nobleman, who had visited the Red River as a director in the Hudson Bay Company, conceived the notion of founding an agricultural settlement there. He obtained a grant of land,

embracing all the territory drained by Lake Winnipeg, extending, of course, south to Lake Traverse in Minnesota; and the new year brought out a small company of Highland Scotchmen. They settled at the present site of Winnipeg, but had a rough time enough of it for the first ten years, being driven out two or three times by the French Canadian settlers, drowned out by floods, and having their crops destroyed by grasshoppers. They held their ground, however, and, in 1821 the worst of their troubles was removed by the amalgamation of the hostile Northwest Company with the Hudson Bay Company. The great trading monopoly then extended its jurisdiction over the whole Northwest, establishing posts from Lake Superior to the Arctic, and from the Red River to the Pacific ocean; and exercising, through its army of clerks and functionaries, all the civil, military and judicial rights of an independent government. The Red River settlement became a mixed community of Scotch, French and Indian blood, cultivating a narrow strip of land along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, and existing by sufferance of the commercial lords of the country. They raised abundant crops and lived prosperously; but, for want of communication with the outside world, could neither market their surplus nor increase their numbers by emigration. The colony survived in this dead-alive condition until the foundation of the Canadian confederation. In 1868 negotiations were begun for the extinction of the Hudson Bay Company's title to the lands, which were concluded a year or two later. The company received \$1,500,000 and one-twentieth of the public lands. The company still exercises its old rights in the remote frontier, but abdicates them as fast as settlements are made and local governments formed. The annexation of Manitoba to the Dominion was not accomplished without some friction, the French Canadians and half-breeds, under Louis Riel, raising the standard of revolt, and formed a provisional government. The rebellion was a mere burlesque, though it lasted a year, and rose to the tragic level in one event—the shooting of an Englishman named Scott by order of the half-drunken provisional government. The revolt fell to pieces upon the appearance of British troops, though it is claimed that the Province obtained more favorable terms from the Dominion by this show of force. In 1871 Manitoba peace-

ably became a Province of Canada, and began the career of prosperity sketched above.

Manitoba, as organized in 1871, contained only about 14,000 square miles, the Province of Keewatin lying to the east, and the great Northwest Territory to the west. By recent legislation it has been extended to the east, west and north, so that it now contains about 117,000 square miles, or one-half more than Minnesota. It is governed by a Provincial Parliament, with a responsible ministry, whose head is Hon. John Norquay, a product of the country. The monarchial principle is represented by Lieutenant Governor Cauchon, a respectable old French Canadian party, who draws his salary with grace and dignity. The Province is nearly all prairie and cultivable land.





### III.

#### DOWN LAKE WINNIPEG.

SIX HUNDRED MILES IN A HUDSON BAY STEAMER — THE LOWER RED RIVER AND ITS SWAMPS — LAKE WINNIPEG, ITS SHORES AND WATERS — RUNNING THE GRAND RAPIDS OF THE SASKATCHEWAN — THE PARADISE OF POT FISHERMEN — A CHARACTERISTIC HUDSON BAY COMPANY POST.

During the first week in July I traveled by water 320 miles north from Winnipeg to the head of Nelson River and the mouth of the Saskatchewan. At the former place I was still 300 miles from the point where the whole water system of the Winnipeg basin discharges itself through the mouth of the Nelson into Hudson Bay. At the latter point I was at the threshold of 1,200 miles of water navigation, through thousands of square miles of the fertile wheat growing belt to the rich mineral deposits at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. The magnificent distances and wonderful undeveloped capacities of this country are not its only surprises. Parallels of latitude seem to be wiped out, and isothermal lines to stand upon their heads. We sailed the whole distance under Italian skies, through balmy summer breezes and past shores clad in luxuriant verdure. All through we slept with our outer state room doors open, passed evenings upon the upper deck and sought shelter from the burning sun during the day. Only one day was it oppressively hot during the trip. On that day I afterwards learned the mercury stood at 95 degrees in the shade at Winnipeg. Surely when Lake Winnipeg is fairly opened to convenient travel, it will become a popular tourists' resort, rivaling Lake George and the St. Lawrence. The only atmospheric disturbance experienced was a veritable tropical gust of thunder, rain, wind and hail, at the mouth of the Sas-

katchewan. It lasted about half an hour. At almost the highest latitude reached on the trip, something more than 54° north, I saw garden patches reclaimed with difficulty from the desolate swamps, with vegetables apparently as far advanced as in the Red River Valley, and heard wonderful relations of the quick productive growth of the cereals and vegetables in the fertile Saskatchewan and Peace River regions to the west, on the same and higher parallels.

To make an end of generalizations, the only steam navigation at present on Lake Winnipeg is by the Hudson Bay Company's steam tug Colvile, Capt. Hackland, which makes trips about weekly during the season, carrying supplies to, and returning with furs from other company's posts on Lake Winnipeg, the Saskatchewan, Hudson Bay and the rivers that flow to the Arctic Ocean. The Colvile is an exceedingly strongly built little craft of some hundred tons capacity. By the accident of co-incident invitations from Mr. John H. McTavish, chief factor of the company at Fort Garry, quite a large party of tourists for these unfrequented waters met upon the deck of the Colvile, upon the last Wednesday in June. Senator Butler, of South Carolina, and Gen. P. M. B. Young, of Georgia, went after fish and relaxation. Mr. F. Jay Haynes, of Fargo, who has carried his ubiquitous camera from Deadwood to Fort Benton and from Lake Superior to the Yellowstone went in the interest of his art. Mr. Roderick Ross, the Hudson Bay official in charge of Norway House, on the Nelson river, returned to his post. I shall often quote Mr. Ross in writing of the Northwest, perhaps sometimes without inverted commas. He is a splendid specimen of the Hudson Bay official, born at Norway House and trained through all the grades of the service until he succeeded his father, who was factor at the post before him. He has lived at most of the posts north of the Saskatchewan, and gave me more exact information about the country than any other three men I met.

The steamer dropped down the river from Fort Garry at night to Colvile landing, just below Selkirk, and we joined her there in the morning by rail. The road runs a short distance from the river through a section of country not very inviting in appearance, though it has great natural richness. Its general appearance is like that above Winnipeg, except that it is higher and

better drained. There are few signs of cultivation, and the land is covered with a low scrubby underbrush. The uncultivated appearance is explained by the peculiar method of land surveying adopted by the early settlers. Each family was given a narrow front on the river, with a long strip of land extending back. What we saw were the back door ends of these shoestring farms. The river fronts, which we saw in ascending the river on



RAILWAY PORTAGE AROUND GRAND RAPIDS.

our return, presented the aspect of well tilled and prosperous farms. From Selkirk a spur track leads to the steamboat landing, making the most northerly steam railway track on the American continent. The *Colville* completed her lading here during the day, and at about 4 o'clock Wednesday afternoon started on her voyage down the river. At this place the river is

only slightly larger than at Winnipeg, say 350 feet broad, and flows in a crooked course between banks fifteen to twenty feet high and somewhat wooded, but showing, in a gradual decline and frequent stretches of marshes on one or the other side, evidences of preparation for the marshy level of the mouth. From Selkirk as far as habitable land extends, the banks are occupied by an Indian reservation, and are slightly cultivated. At this season of the year the Indian agent makes his annual visit, and his wards were flocking in great numbers to receive their annuity. On our return five days later they were assembled in form about the chief's house, and their teepees, canoes, dogs, and children added a picturesqueness to the scene. The Indians on the lake are Chippewas, Swampys, Ojibways and Crees, and they are so mixed by the Canadian policy of segregation that there is little tribal individuality left in any settlement. They have made some progress in civilization, and now constitute the chief reliance of the Hudson Bay people for laborers, replacing the Canadian voyagers, the current of whose blood has disappeared in aboriginal mixture.

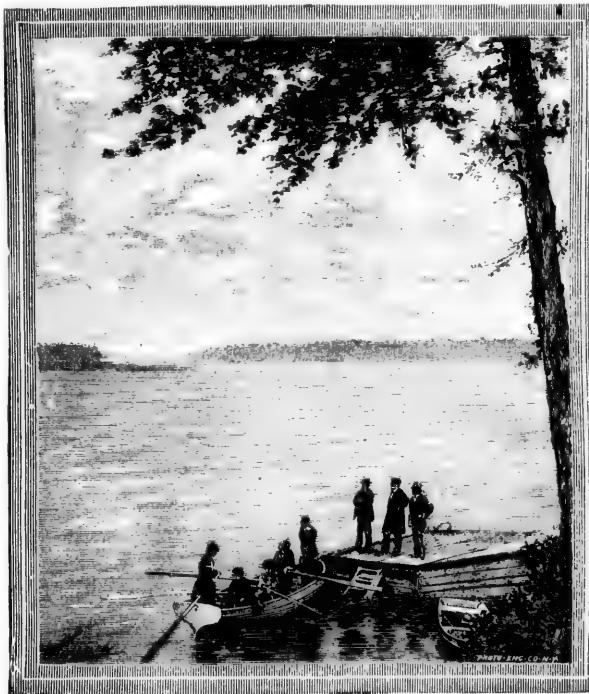
Thirty miles below Selkirk, and about twice as far by river below Winnipeg, the river soaks gradually into the lake through a number of mouths. For the last ten or twenty miles, the banks are swampy, and at last it is hard to tell where land ends and water begins. The land is encroaching upon the water and new land is made year by year, as the whole Red River valley has gradually been made. The same influence has made a dangerous bar at the mouth of the river which the government has not improved much by some clumsy devices of buoys and lightship. Once fairly in the lake the journey, though delightful in the cabin and deck life of the passenger, is without external interest for thirty-six hours, twelve hours to the narrowest part of the lake, where the company has a post, and twenty-four more to the mouth of the Saskatchewan. This gap may as well be filled with so much of the inevitable description as is essential to the present purpose.

Lake Winnipeg is two hundred and forty miles long, and so narrow for the southern half of its length that the navigator is never out of sight of land. To the north, however, there is a bulbous swell that puts him in the midst of an apparently bound-

less expanse of waves, though even here the muddy, shallow water destroys the oceanic delusion. The lake is nowhere deep, measured by the standard of the great American lakes, among which it resembles Erie in appearance more than any other. It has occasional rocks and sand-bars, which require careful pilotage, and is said to be capable of raising a nasty sea in a wind. The banks are alike in vegetation, but totally different in rock exposure. The geological boundary lies within the lake, and the east shore is rounded granite masses, while the west is abrupt limestone cliffs. The shores are never very bold, and are often marshy, though the land gradually rises to the north. The timber is tamarack in the main, with some spruce on the higher ground, and the deciduous trees characteristic of the country, poplar, birch, aspen, etc. I could not hear, definitely, of any pine, though the west shore is apparently as well fitted for it as the Lake of the Woods. The lake is full of wooded islands, with the same timber as the main land. There is no agricultural land worth speaking of on the lake. All that is not rock is marsh. The lake has two visible industries in the future, when it shall have been opened to the world—its apparently exhaustless fisheries of whitefish and sturgeon, which support all the Indian population of its banks without effort, and its timber, which is not of the best, but is adapted to certain inferior uses. There are two steamboats building in Winnipeg now, to tow lumber on the lakes. If the limestone quarries of the Red River are ever exhausted, drafts can be made to any amount upon the cliffs of the lake. There is also said to be a good sandstone exposed on the southeast shore.

Early in the morning of the second day after leaving Winnipeg, the steamer, after passing through a group of verdure-clad islands, rounded a rather bolder limestone cape than common, and entered the mouth of a magnificent stream, half a mile wide, flowing with a deep, swift current from the west, and soon came in sight of the Grand Rapids of the Saskatchewan. This stream has none of the characteristics of the Saskatchewan as described by travelers who have seen the upper course only, except its swiftness. The banks, though low, are rocky, and the bottom the same; and the water, though not clear, has lost the muddy look of the prairies. Even at the mouth the water has a restless,

lively motion that carries the eye back to the first point of the white line of the Grand Rapid, four miles above. Within this four miles is an unequaled harbor, with deep water close to shore. The steamer-landing is about two miles up, and the same distance from the foot of the rapid. Here the Hudson Bay Company has a store, though the post proper is above the rapid. The river narrows rapidly from its mouth, until, at the swiftest point of the rapid, it is only an eighth of a mile wide.



THE SASKATCHEWAN ABOVE GRAND RAPID.

Above it widens to, perhaps, a quarter of a mile.

The steamer spent the whole day here, unloading goods for points in the interior from Cumberland House, a few miles up the river to Jasper House, in the Rocky Mountains, and remoter posts on

the great Arctic rivers. Since the establishment of steam navigation, Grand Rapid has become an important distributing point; perhaps foreshadowing the great city that will rise here when the scattered traders in the interior shall have given place to a dense population. The work of unloading the steamer was done by Indians, who assembled here for the purpose from up and down the lake; and whose only maintenance

is their precarious earnings in this way, and the product of their fertile fisheries, even more productive here than elsewhere on the lake. Whitefish are scooped out in nets by the barrel, and sturgeon of from fifty to 150 pounds are taken at will by the Indian fishermen. Our party devoted itself for some hours to the capture of the humbler pike, who were pulled out of the eddies at the foot of the rapids until the most enthusiastic fishermen were cloyed with sport, and permitted their captives to wriggle off the hook.

About noon we were warned to prepare for the most exciting incident of the whole voyage—the running of the Grand Rapid in a boat. To do this it was necessary to ascend, by a portage four miles long, to a point seven miles distant by river, where there is another steamboat-landing, whence the company's steamers depart for the Upper Saskatchewan. All the company's goods are transhipped over this portage, though formerly, when they were transported in open boats, it was customary to run the rapid coming down. About four years ago the transhipment was much facilitated by the construction across the portage of a substantial iron tramway; certainly the most northern railway, of any sort, on the continent, over which loaded cars are rapidly drawn by horses. Our party was loaded upon one of these cars, and the steamer's yawl upon another. A ride of half an hour, with a single stop to photograph the railway, brought us to Grand Rapid post, in charge of Mr. William Clark, a clean and attractive cottage and storehouse, surrounded by a lot of dirty and repulsive squaws and children. Little time was lost getting the boat into the water, and the party into the boat. There were five passengers, three Indian oarsmen and an intelligent half-breed pilot, Joe Atkinson, famous for skill as a sturgeon fisher and river lore. He guided the craft with a long steering oar in the stern; and for the first mile the boat was rowed tranquilly across the stream from the mouth to the south shore, in a swift but smooth current. Then, as the breakers came in sight, an invisible hand seemed to seize her keel and hurry her onward. From this point there was no more rowing, except just enough to keep the boat-head to the breakers; and the roar of the waters, the heavy plunging of the boat, and the excited cries of the Indians to each other, with the sight of rocks and breakers, aroused every sense to the liveliest activity.

Only a few moments after entering the breakers there was a sensation of genuine alarm among the inexperienced passengers. As I said, we entered the rapid on the south side. Just ahead of us a limestone cliff jutted out into the stream, and just at its base the water plunged downward in a long swirl, at an angle of thirty degrees, ending a great dash of foam where the water struck the rock. We seemed to be plunging straight for this, in spite of the efforts of the crew; but there was not time for a thought of danger before we shot past or through it, just outside the rock and foam, and found ourselves in a quiet eddy behind the rock, where an Indian jumped ashore to make fast the boat. It seems the pilot had been told to land here, to permit the photographer to take views of the rapid, and a better place could not have been chosen. Rocky banks twenty feet high overlooked the rapid both above and below, and revealed its formation at a glance. The course of the river, hitherto flowing through tertiary alluvium, is here interrupted by the wall of Silurian limestone that bounds this geological region. Probably it once fell over this ledge in a great fall, but in the course of ages it has cut its way through in a rapid three miles long, with a fall of forty-three feet. A mile below the cliff, where we stopped, was the most contracted point of the stream, where it rushed between precipitous rock banks twenty feet high. Lower down the banks become clay and drift. For the whole three miles there is not a foot of smooth water. It is all a surging flood, swelling in the open channel into waves six feet apparently from trough to crest, and near shore, or where currents meet, as below the single island that interrupts the stream, breaking up into the most tumultuous cross sea imaginable. The stream is generally deep, and with few rocks, making the running more exciting than dangerous. Our course from the eddy was through nearly three miles of this boiling current, generally on the south side, but sometimes in the middle of the stream. The boat plunged a good deal in the heavy swell, rising on the crest of a wave with her bows in the air, and plunging with a crash into the next, sending a shower of water over the unlucky forward passengers.

I returned to the post in the afternoon, and ran the rapid a second time in a birch-bark canoe, with two Indian paddlers. The experience was pleasanter and more exciting than in the

boat. The fragile craft, in whose bottom I sat, with only half an inch of bark between me and the boiling flood, rode buoyantly the waves through which the boat plunged, and shipped scarcely any water. The vestal fire of my pipe, in spite of a good deal of care, was extinguished in the boat. In the canoe the sacred spark burned steadily from beginning to end. The



GRAND RAPID OF THE SASKATCHEWAN — LOOKING DOWN.

boat made the three miles of rough water in half an hour, the canoe in half the time. I tried to get some basis for comparison between these and the St. Lawrence rapids, but could find no one who had seen both. These are certainly shorter than the series of rapids near Montreal; and, though quite as swift and

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declivitous, are less intercepted by rocks, and, I think, form a less formidable obstruction to navigation. Strong steamers, built for the purpose, could both ascend and descend them with the aid of trackling ropes.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in taking photographs and visiting scenes and objects of interest about the landing. A dog-team was harnessed to a sledge for our benefit, and went through the evolutions as well as possible on the bare ground. These beasts, which are a large hound with pointed ears and shaggy fur, look like a cross between the familiar Esquimaux pet and the mastiff. They are exceedingly intelligent, and are driven tandem in fours. They will draw a man sixty miles in a day. The boat finished her unloading and left for the Nelson River about 8 o'clock; but I have something more to say about the Saskatchewan before going on with her, for which there is not room in this chapter.





## I V.

### UP LAKE WINNIPEG.

THE SASKATCHEWAN RIVER AND VALLEY AND ITS RESOURCES — AGRICULTURAL WONDERS OF THE PEACE RIVER COUNTRY — MINERAL WEALTH OF THE UPPER SASKATCHEWAN — MANUFACTURING CAPABILITIES OF THE GRAND RAPID — NELSON RIVER, ITS PAST AND FUTURE — THE SHORTEST OCEAN ROUTE TO EUROPE — THE EAST SIDE OF THE LAKE — RED RIVER AND ITS CULTIVATED SHORES ABOVE SELKIRK.

I have written about the physical features and natural aspect of the mouth of the Saskatchewan, its attractions to the tourist and sportsman. This is the least important point of view. The reflecting mind will rather view this mighty water channel as the gateway to an undeveloped agricultural and mineral empire, unsurpassed by any unoccupied region upon the continent. The Saskatchewan River, when slightly improved and opened to navigation, is to be the great ally of the Canadian Pacific Railway in unlocking to the world resources of industrial wealth yet undreamed of. From Grand Rapid two steamers of the Hudson Bay Company now navigate the river 1,200 miles to Fort Edmonton, passing for most of the way through land fit for the cultivation of the cereals and root crops, and for grazing on a large scale. Capt. Palliser estimated the extent of the valley of the Saskatchewan at 65,000,000 square miles, of which one-third is arable. Other explorers have thought this too small. The only cultivation yet attempted in this region is on small tracts about the Hudson Bay posts. Mr. Ross, of Norway House, who has lived all through the valley, told me the finest wheat and barley in the world was raised and harvested year after year in the short, fervent summers of these high latitudes. The season lasts from the end

of April to the middle of October, and summer frosts are seldom severe enough to injure cereals. A few grains of oats, apparently originating spontaneously in a field of barley, the original seed of which was brought from England thirty years ago, saved and multiplied from year to year by Mr. Ross, finally produced a field of magnificent grain of a new species and unprecedented productiveness. Potatoes a foot long are a common product. The fitness of the country for grazing is demonstrated by the fact that stock used in traveling subsists in the winter upon the naturally-cured grass found under the snow, and stabled stock comes out fat and strong on no other feed than the wild hay of the country. Mr. Ross has also been stationed for years in the Peace River country, and confirmed to me the vague reports of travelers of its mildness and fertility. Here is a region lying north of the Saskatchewan Valley, at least as great in extent and as mild in climate and fertile in soil. Mr. Ross describes the season as about the same. There are two sections to the valley, a narrow belt of alluvial land along the river and a high plateau above, both fitted for cultivation, and the latter for grazing also. This country, like the extreme upper Saskatchewan, is abundantly wooded.

Unlike the prairie section to the east, the upper Saskatchewan and Peace River country adds incalculable mineral wealth to agricultural capabilities. The gold mines on the headwaters of the Saskatchewan and its tributaries are among the hoary traditions of the country. There are many places on the lower river where the color of gold may be obtained by washing its sand, and many persons believe that the gold mines of British Columbia, which exported nearly a million of dollars annually twenty years ago, will be outdone by future discoveries on the west slope of this mountain. But the region has surer mineral wealth than quartz claims. Lignite is not more abundant on the Little Missouri than Cretaceous coal on the Saskatchewan about Edmonton and the Peace River. This coal is of the same sort as that mined for commercial purposes on Vancouver's Island, and has long been used in the smithies of the Hudson Bay posts. It is said to possess the bituminous quality lacking in the lignite, though this seems a geological anomaly. But the Athabasca River, near the Peace, has liquid bitumen, natural coal tar, in great lakes like those of Trinidad in Brazil, promising, perhaps, petroleum oil wells to

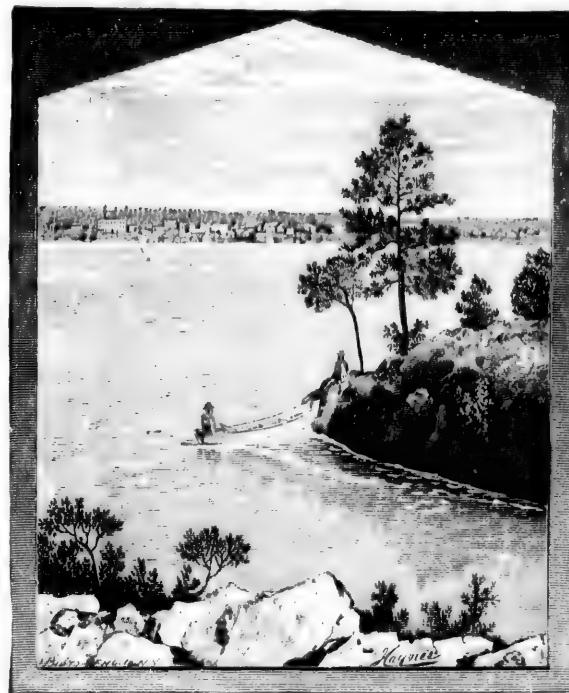
the discoverers of the future. The captain of the *Colvile* had seen the Edmonton coal, and pronounced it better for his high pressure engines than the Iowa article and equal to that he was using on the present trip, which appeared to be Brier Hill of good quality. Farther, the Peace River has bog iron ore or hematite of good quality and in great quantity, only waiting for the hand of the smelter, and Mr. Ross had heard of copper and silver ores in the mountains.

The Saskatchewan is the natural channel destined in the future to conduct all its industrial wealth to the world's markets. It shall be to the country at the foot of the Rocky Mountains what the Mississippi is to the Northwest. Down its rapid current shall float the steamboat and barge lines of the future, conveying its wheat, perhaps, to the seaboard; perhaps, to a new Canadian Minneapolis, built upon its magnificent water power; and its coal and ore to the treeless prairies of its lower banks, and the foundries and mills of future Canadian Pittsburghs and Lowells. There is a nearer future and a more accessible commercial resource than this. North of the Saskatchewan, and penetrated by its lacustrine network of tributaries near Cumberland House, are the "strong woods," the lower edge of the great forest of the Arctic zone with its uncounted stores of hardwood and northern pine. Its channel offers a ready path over which the lumbermen of the near future shall bring from these timber for the cities of the south and the future saw mills of the Grand Rapid. At Prince Albert, on the lower river, there are already two saw mills, industriously cutting spruce and hardwood into lumber for a thriving settlement.

Leaving the mouth of the Saskatchewan and its magnificent possibilities, the *Colvile* steamed away in the northern twilight of Friday evening towards the most northerly post on the lake, at the point where it is discharged through Nelson River into Hudson Bay. Twenty miles from the lake on this river is Norway House, once the most important company's post in this region, and the place where the annual council was held. That was when the company's way of communication with the outside world was Hudson Bay, and all its traffic with Europe went and came by ocean vessels to York Fort, and thence over a hard passage by boat and portage to Norway House. Nelson river is not and never can be navigable. It breaks through the granite chain of the

Laurentides as the Saskatchewan breaks through the slighter barrier of the Silurian limestone, and its whole course is broken by furious and impassable rapids.

Since the opening of a water and rail outlet through Red River, the glory of Norway House has departed and Fort Garry has succeeded it as the company's capital. The steamer did not go up to Norway House on account of the difficult channel, but



POST AT BEREN'S RIVER.

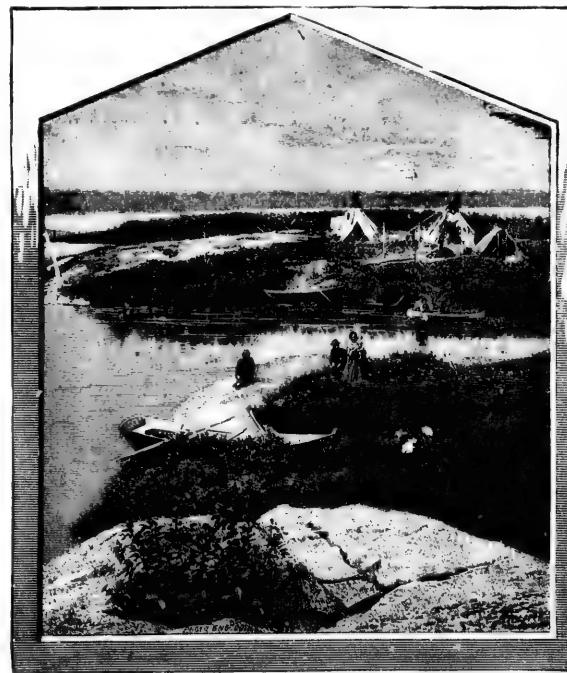
discharged freight at Warren's Landing, at the mouth of the river, whence it was taken up in York boats, great unwieldy craft moved with long sweeps and carrying about four tons of freight each. Mr. Ross left us here to continue his homeward trip in a canoe. There are two branches of the Nelson, only one of which we saw. It was apparently about a quarter of a mile wide, but as it passes at once into a lake the estimate with the eye was not

easy. The banks were low and wooded, with occasional rounded masses of granite. While the steamer was unloading we rowed three miles down the river, finding a stiff current for three amateur oarsmen on our return, but finding reward for our exertions in a beautiful expanse of clear water, studded with green islands and prodigal of fish. It figures on the map as Playgreen Lake.

It would be an oversight to leave the Nelson River without some reference to the brilliant future dreamed of for this region by some bold speculators, as the future outlet of the entire Northwest to the ocean and the ports of Europe. Geographically speaking, the mouth of Nelson River is not only the nearest ocean port to the northwest territory, but it is nearer to Liverpool by sea than any port on the north Atlantic coast. The route is by the Davis Strait and the south coast of Greenland, and the only difficulty is that it is closed by the ice for nine months in the year. The bay is regularly visited in the summer, however, by the sailing vessels of the Hudson Bay Company, which leave north of Scotland ports in June and start back from York Factory in September. A steamer is engaged, the present summer, in making the trip from St. John's, N. F., to York Factory and back, to test the feasibility of steam navigation of the Bay. The other part of the plan is the building of a railroad from Norway House to York Factory, following as nearly as may be the course of the river. It can be built for \$5,000,000 or \$6,000,000, or less than the cost of the Canadian Pacific section from Selkirk to Thunder Bay. Charters for such a road were obtained from the last Dominion Parliament, and explorations of the route are to be made this year. If this dream of a Hudson Bay route to Europe is ever realized, it will become the outlet of the great Saskatchewan belt, as the Canadian Pacific is that of the great southern belt of fertile territory. Perhaps one great milling centre of the future, located at the grand rapid of the Saskatchewan, will grind the wheat of its valley for export by Hudson Bay, while another on the rapid of the Winnipeg River will grind that of the southern belt, and two streams of bread material instead of one will flow from the frozen Northwest to feed the starving millions of temperate Europe.

Leaving the Nelson River, we at last turned southward, and a run of about ten hours more brought us to the Company's main

post on the east side of the lake, north of the mouth of the Winnipeg—Beren's River. Here is quite an extensive store and a considerable Indian population for trading purposes, scattered thinly over a reservation reaching three or four miles into the interior. The chief interest Beren's River has for the visitor is æsthetic. It is the most picturesque spot we saw on the lake. The whole shore is dark rounded masses of granite, covered with a thin covering of vegetable mould, supporting a sombre growth



VIEW ON BEREN'S RIVER — LAKE WINNIPEG.

of spruce and tamarack. Through this steals the river, flowing about 200 feet wide with a slow current, winding in and out among rocky eminences, and finally reaching the lake by several channels separated by islands, some verdure clad, some bare and gray. The water is stained black by the peat of the swamps at its source, and the whole aspect, though there is nothing low or swampy about it, is somber. The passage to the light and

freshness of the open lake, through dozens of islands of all sizes, is charming for the passengers, though somewhat anxious for the captain, on account of the number of sunken rocks in the channel.

Two Indians paddled me three or four miles up the river while the steamer was discharging, and I found the somber beauty of the debouchure repeated and intensified. There is said to be a fine rapid some twelve miles up. The Indians told me there was good pine timber up the stream, and undertook to point out its beginning, but what they indicated were only larger spruces. I was told there is no good pine on the lake. Among the objects of curious interest at the Beren's River post are a novel fish pond made by enclosing a part of the lake with a heavy stockade, and containing, when we were there, some sixty immense sturgeon, for the fish supply of the place; and an extraordinarily fine kennel of dogs, said to be the largest and best trained on the lake. Some of them are as large as the largest breed of Newfoundlands.

This was the last stopping place of the boat, and a run of twenty-four hours through the lake and river brought us to our starting point at Colvile Landing. From here to Winnipeg the scene changed surprisingly. From barren shores and houseless woods, we sailed by cultivated farms and neat, prosperous looking homes. This is the oldest and best settled part of the Red River Valley, peopled with the descendants of the original Scotch and French Canadian settlers. In many places the farms are cultivated down to the edge of the clay banks, generally twelve to twenty feet high, that confine the river. In other places the banks are wooded, or give place to green meadows. The river here has quite a rapid current, and, with the varying and sometimes gently rolling banks, resembles some of the richly cultivated valleys in the Ohio basin. Sometimes there is a limestone outcrop beneath the upper clay of the banks. Below Selkirk a limestone ledge crosses the stream, making a considerable rapid and giving opportunity, on the east side, for a quarry of excellent building stone, which is already industriously worked. Large quantities of the stone are shipped to Winnipeg and points on the Canadian Pacific.

The old town of Selkirk, named after the historic earl, looks forlornly from the bank to the river, about twenty miles below

Winnipeg. This was originally chosen for the railroad crossing, and saw the beginning of very prosperous times; but its prosperity has departed to Winnipeg with the change of route, and the price of a single town lot in the former place would buy the whole site. The population is reduced to 200 or 300 people, too old, feeble or unenterprising to get away. A little above Selkirk is another fading historic landmark, Lower Fort Garry, an irregular quadrangle of masonry, with loop-holes for musketry surrounding a peaceful, finely kept lawn and neat office's quarters and stores. The place was deserted, even by the usual loafing Indians, the whole population of the neighborhood having assembled on the reservation a few miles below, to receive their annuity. The assemblage on the bank presented a picturesque appearance as we passed, with their clustering tepees, swarming women and children, and the flotilla of canvass and trading boats on the river. Fort Garry was once the most important post on the Red River. But its scepter has passed to the Winnipeg Garry, as that of Selkirk has passed to the city. From Selkirk to Winnipeg is about six hours' steaming, and we finished the journey without further stop after leaving the Fort, arriving at the Company's wharf about 2 o'clock, where we took leave of the hospitable Colvile with hearty regret,—to be stunned at the first step with the almost incredible news that President Garfield has been assassinated three days before.





## V.

### THE LAKE OF THE WOODS.

A REGION OF ROCKS, WOODS AND WATERS—OLD AND NEW ROUTES ACROSS THE LAURENTIAN BELT—THE THUNDER BAY SECTION OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC—GEOLOGICAL FORMATIONS—ENGINEERING DIFFICULTIES—A SPECTRAL JOURNEY—FLOATING AMONG A THOUSAND ISLANDS—MINERAL, MANUFACTURING AND TIMBER RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY.

The tumultuous belt of country lying between the Red River Valley and Lake Superior, though without attractions for the farmer, is, in some other not unimportant respects, the most interesting part of the Northwest. It is a wilderness of primitive rocks, reticulating lakes and forest streams and bottomless muskeg swamps; difficult to penetrate, uninviting as a residence, yet teeming with animal life and mineral and forest wealth, and presenting a thousand attractions to the adventurous tourist and sportsman. I have penetrated this singular region about 150 miles, from the edge of the Red River Valley to the northwest corner of the Lake of the Woods, by rail and water routes, and have brought away impressions enough of its wild and varied beauty to make a small volume instead of a long letter. Before the projection of the Canadian Pacific Railway there were three canal and portage routes through this country: the old Northwest Company's route through the chain of lakes along the American boundary; the route recommended to the Canadian government, by Mr. Simon Dawson, and bearing his name, from Thunder Bay by land to the Seine River, down that stream to Rainy Lake, and thence to the Lake of the Woods; and the route followed by Professor Hinds, in 1858, from Thunder Bay up the Kaministiquia River, thence by various streams and port-

ages across the height of land to Rainy Lake, and thence to the Lake of the Woods. All these routes converged to Rat Portage, the point where the Winnipeg River leaves the Lake of the Woods, and thence struck across the prairie by land to Fort Garry. The railway takes the same course, and Rat Portage is now one of its stations. From that point, however, the line strikes north of the Lake of the Woods, directly across the height of land to Thunder Bay.

Accordingly I took the train for Rat Portage, in the Territory of Keewatin, the day after my return from the Lake Winnipeg trip. For the first thirty or forty miles west of the Red River the country is like most of that on the east side of the valley, somewhat low and wet, with clumps of stunted shrubbery dotting the meadow. East of that the scenery begins to change. The prairie gives place to muskeg, and the shrubbery is succeeded by a growth of tamarack, poplar and other trees, constantly increasing in size and number until the road runs through a very respectable forest. The water changes, too; the muddy prairie rivulets being succeeded by more rapid streams of clear water, stained dark, however, by the bogs along their course. I recognize in the familiar features of the Laurentian region, on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg, and began to look for the primitive rock characteristic of it. There is little sign of settlement or habitation on the line of the road. The first considerable station is at the crossing of Whitemouth River, a tributary of the Winnipeg. This is a sort of depot for timber supply along the road. Piles and ties are cut along the stream, and floated down for use in the construction, both east and west. The next point is Cross Lake, seventy-seven miles from Selkirk, where the part of its line turned over to the syndicate ends. From here to Rat Portage the government is finishing the line, the contractor having surrendered the work, after exhausting all his funds in dumping earth into the bottomless lakes across which the intrepid government engineer chose to carry the line. When I was there the road was graded to Rat Portage, though two bridges remained to be built across the two branches of the Winnipeg, to a point about two miles from the river; but a recent land slip in one of the treacherous lake-fills compelled trains to stop six miles away, where passengers are transferred by boat.

At Cross Lake, thirty-seven miles from the Portage, the strange, wild region of the Laurentian chain really begins. It is tremendously picturesque, but almost inconceivably difficult railroad construction. Low mountains of primitive rock, clothed with tall, slender, half-starved looking tamaracks, growing on a thin soil, or in cracks of the rock, rise between endless chains of small, deep lakes, nearly all connected with each other through narrow valleys. There is no distinct, continuous valley, and the road breaks through the granite masses of the hills, and crosses the lakes as best it can. These mirror-like lakes, framed in sombre vegetation, and glittering with the dark metallic sheen of shaded swamp water, are full of wild beauty, and full of savage terrors for the civil engineer. They were the only path through the country in its ante-railroad days; and they seem to dispute the passage of their civilized rival with a barbarian jealousy. The granite mountains are a trifling barrier compared with these lakes. Nitro-glycerine has cut a smooth path through the former, and the trains glide luxuriously over a solid bed; but the lakes still forbid their passage. They have steep walls of rock, often sloping down in an inverted cone, whose apex is 150 to 200 feet below the water's level. When one of these frightful pits is filled with the alluvial washings from the rocks it becomes a muskeg, which is a greater terror than a lake. A muskeg is not a swamp; supports no vegetation except a quaking covering of moss, when it rises above the water, and contains little prophecy of future solid ground. The water, unable to drain off through the rocky bottom, remains mixed with the washings from the hill-sides, in a black liquid mass, through which a pile may be driven its whole length by a single stroke, and which engulfs, literally, cubic miles of earth without affording a solid surface. The muskegs are crossed by the railroad by filling from the bottom with fragments of rock, or by temporary trestles precariously built upon the sloping bottom, or planted in the liquid mud. These trestles are afterwards laboriously filled with earth, dumped from gravel trains run upon them. Two steam shovels are now at work, day and night, at this filling between Cross Lake and Rat Portage. This endless filling is what has exhausted the exchequer of the contractor and delayed the completion of this section two years. It was to

have been finished July 1, 1879. At Cross Lake, which is cut in two by the track, earth has been steadily thrown into the lake month after month, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars, until it has spread out and formed acres of solid ground on either side of the bank. At Lake Deception a solid roadway had been made, with infinite pains and cost, when, shortly before my visit, an immense land-slide down the slippery declivity of the lake



LAKE FILL—ON THE THUNDER BAY BRANCH.

bottom let the track fall down in a huge concave, causing the break that then interrupted travel. It is impossible to count the cost of this section of road, divided, as it now is, between the contractor and government, but it must be estimated at millions.

Our train passed Cross Lake early in the evening; and from there to the end the journey was full of varied interest. Through

deep rocky cuts and tunnels, past lake after lake, over lofty embankments and tottering temporary trestles, all seen and felt in the magic of twilight and moonlight, the trip was doubly worth all its small hardships. The fresh rock cuts revealed the primitive lithology of the region to perfection. There is great variety in the rocks. True granite, or even syenite, is rare. The prevailing rock is a dark dioritic trap, with irregular veinings and splashes of impure quartz. There is some quartzite in masses, and the flesh color of nearly pure feldspar is seen in many cuts. On the lake-shore and islands I afterwards saw a sort of talcose schist, with a fine vertical clearage in large plates when disintegrated by water action; and was told of large veins of gold-bearing quartz, of which more hereafter. The beauty of some of the moonlight effects on this tedious night's journey cannot be surpassed in the White Mountains. I remember one long line of pure cold white light, seen from a high trestle, stretching from lake to lake, broken into shimmering ripples by the jarring motion of the train communicated to the banks, extinguished to dull blackness by the dark masses between, and kindled again with a faint luminous green upon the tree-tops beyond. At one point a truly diabolical element was imparted into the peacefulness of the scene by the apparition of a steam shovel, blazing out a shower of sparks into the night, with dusky figures hoarsely shouting and working amidst its puffing and rattle, seen like familiar demons by the light of smoky torches. We were landed about midnight on the bank of an arm of the Winnipeg River, and guided by lanterns down a declivity where York boats waited. Loaded in these, a spectral moonlight voyage of two miles in a winding channel, past wooded banks, brought us to a short portage, over which we scrambled to the Lake of the Woods. New boats, tugs, yachts and canoes took us here, by mysterious ways among the islets and inlets of the lake, to the town of Rat Portage, where we found clean beds, and tired sleep about 2 o'clock in the morning.

Opening my eyes upon Rat Portage and its surroundings the next morning, dim moonlit waters and shadow-haunted shores were transformed into a shining lake and a squalid end-of-the-track town, in the shanty stage of its municipal existence. The only presentable building there is a hotel, built in hopeful antici-

pation of its fame as a watering-place, already beginning to spread through the western provinces. Indeed, quite a large party of overworked Winnipeggers, as well as several gentlemen from the States, the former accompanied by ladies and children, braved the present dangers of the Rat Portage route on this very trip. When fast daily trains are run without interruption to Rat Portage it is certain to become the most popular summer resort in Western Canada. Then the town will probably spruce up a little. At present the less said about it the better, except that the tourist can find comfortable accommodations, and has the lake at the very door of his hotel, with a fleet of yachts, canoes and small steam tugs to aid him to fly from this one little spot where man has spoiled nature's handiwork, to the thousand sylvan recesses where he can find her in all her purity. Before the town lies the northern extremity of the Lake of the Woods, just back of it an arm of the Winnipeg River; almost in sight of the wharves are the two beautiful falls over which the two outlets of the lake begin their downward course to Lake Winnipeg. Opposite them the lake stretches away more than a hundred miles to the south and west, though the view is shut in to the narrow limits of a broad river by the verdant slopes of a thousand closely clustering islands. The Lake of the Woods is an irregularly circular body of water, from fifty to one hundred miles in diameter, with its outline interrupted by a large re-entrant promontory from the west. It is about one thousand feet above the sea level, and the water is clear and sweet. Its notable characteristic is the multitude of wooded islands that dot its surface in every direction and make a voyage upon it resemble a trip upon a sylvan river or in an inclosed bay. There is only one part of the lake where there is a wide stretch of open water, in the southwest corner.

I saw this beautiful sheet of water to admirable advantage in a journey of some fifty miles, with a party of railroad engineers, from Rat Portage to White Fish Bay, the great indentation north of the promontory above referred to. This passage is a part of the regular route over which laborers and supplies now pass to the eastern end of the contract section lying east of that now nearly completed to Rat Portage. This section is sixty-seven miles long and crosses the rocky region north of the lake to meet the line now pushing east from Thunder Bay. It is said to be

an exceedingly rough piece of work, with an enormous amount of rock cutting and a greater number of bottomless lakes than have been found west of the Winnipeg. The contractors predict that the difficulty and delay at Cross Lake will be repeated at a dozen places in this section. There are rock cuttings 2,000 feet long and fifty feet high, and numberless lakes where rods and piles scarcely find bottom. The blasting is well forward, and it is thought will be nearly finished this year. The filling is behind, owing to a change in the contract from rock filling to trestlework, and the delay in the completion of the section next west, making it necessary to carry all supplies by a circuitous canoe route.

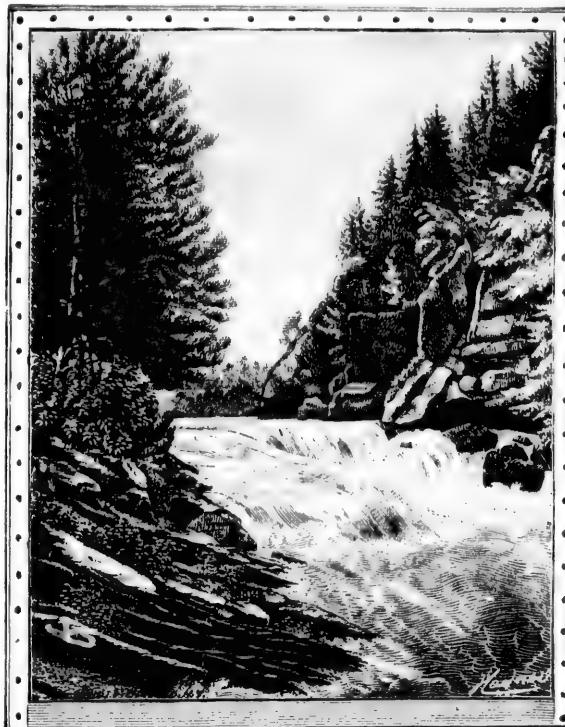
The contractors complain bitterly of the action of the government in changing the contract, intimating that their only object is to get the road built as cheaply as possible, and just well enough to run a train over it and get it accepted by the syndicate, throwing upon the latter the trouble and expense of replacing the temporary work when it breaks down, as it did at Cross Lake. On the other hand, the government engineers claim that \$1,000,000 will be



VIEW ON THE LAKE OF THE WOODS.

saved by the change in the contract, and that the filling can be done at one-eighth the cost from gravel pits by trains over the temporary work. The most obvious hardships of the contractors is the necessity of carrying every pound of material and supplies over a circuitous route of 100 miles by boat and portage to reach a point fifty miles distant on the line of road. In spite of these difficulties it is thought the close of the present season will

see a gap of only twenty-five miles to the line from Thunder Bay to Selkirk. The eastern division will be finished and the contractors expect to build twenty-five miles east of Rat Portage and fifteen miles on the east end of the same section.



RAT PORTAGE FALLS—WINNIPEG RIVER.

We left Rat Portage about noon of a beautiful July day, snugly packed into a York boat with sundry sacks of corn and flour and attached to a small steam tug by a long rope as our propelling power. The journey lasted until evening and was the perfection of indolent progress. Gliding swiftly through smooth water past shores and islands, under a brilliant sky, every hour unrolled new pictures of sylvan beauty. We were hardly ever more than a gunshot from land, and the green islands closed so closely around

us that it was difficult to imagine we were not gliding through a majestic river instead of a lake with more than fifty miles of water to the south of us. Early in the evening we turned into a little inlet and landed at the mouth of a clear stream, up which the route lay to the next portage. Up this we were paddled in canoes two or three miles to an engineer's camp in a woodland glen, whose savage beauty seemed almost profaned by material uses. The stream came tumbling down in a series of picturesque rapids between rocky banks, upon whose level plateau the camp was fixed. Supper and a refreshing slumber upon nature's bed of earth consumed the night, and in the morning my companions started on their arduous journey of fifty miles more by canoes, and over rocky portages to Eagle Lake on the line, while I retraced the easy part of the passage in the tug. This is only one of a dozen charming lake trips that may be arranged from the portage. The longest and most delightful is said to be that through the whole length of the lake and up the Rainy River to Fort Frances, where there are a number of attractive falls and rapids.

I spent the greater part of the next day, my last at the Portage, paddling about the lower end of the lake in a canoe. Some of the islands are quite highly cultivated and yield abundantly of garden vegetables. Others are interesting as the location of Indian graves. The main objects of interest, however, are the two falls of the Winnipeg, which are somewhat difficult of access and attractive in their unspoiled natural beauty. The descent in each case is about twenty feet, but the nearer and larger fall takes half of it in a single leap, making a boiling caldron of pure white foam that contrasts effectively with the dark granite rocks that tower beside it. The other fall is a rapid, extending over an eighth of a mile, with a fall of four or five feet at one point. I saw an Indian here scooping up abundant white fish with a hand net. Indeed, the whole lake teems with fish, from the sturgeon to the pike, and is the paradise of the angler. From here to the lake, the Winnipeg River is a succession of falls and rapids. No less than thirty-two portages are necessary in a canoe journey.

It must not be supposed that the Lake of the Woods is attractive only as a tourist and summer resort. It has great elements of material wealth in its pine forests, even if the hopes of the sanguine speculators who build upon its prospective gold mines are

blasted. I had heard a good deal about these Rat Portage gold mines before I went there, and as usual found the enthusiasm concerning them in direct proportion to the distance. There is certainly plenty of gold-bearing quartz there, but the question of profitable mining remains an open one, and it will take a heavy investment of capital to settle it. The only vein that has yet been worked is that upon Boulder Island, which was very rich in



SAW MILL AND BOOM—LAKE OF THE WOODS.

specimen nuggets. A company was formed, and a few thousand dollars furnished by Mr. Manning, son of one of the railway contractors. They bought a five stamp mill, and went to crushing rock upon a small scale. The first clean-up was made shortly before my visit, and the result was \$26 in gold from ten tons of quartz. So it seems the whole vein is not made up of specimen

nuggets. The company claimed, however, that as much as \$600 in gold was sticking in the new plates of the machine, and that the second clean-up would result better. It is said another quartz vein has been discovered on the main land, twenty-one feet wide, much more promising than that on Boulder Islands. Certainly the rich mineral deposits discovered on the shores of Lake Superior justify the hope that this side of the height of land may not prove wholly barren.

The Lake of the Woods has a surer source of wealth, however, in its exhaustless water power and stores of valuable pine lumber. The shores and islands are covered with Norway pine of the best quality with some white pine. Enterprising lumbermen have acquired the best timber lands, and the search is still going on. There is one mill in operation at Rat Portage, and another is in course of construction by W. J. Macaulay, the pioneer lumberman of Winnipeg, who had just launched a side-wheel steamer 100 feet long, to be used in towing lumber. The water power at the Winnipeg falls alone is inexhaustible. By running canals in different directions through the island fifty mills could be supplied with a never failing flow. This promises to be the future lumber supply and milling center of all the Northwest, the point at which the grain of the prairie district will be converted into flour for shipment to Montreal and Europe—in fact, another Canadian Minneapolis.



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## V I.

### THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.

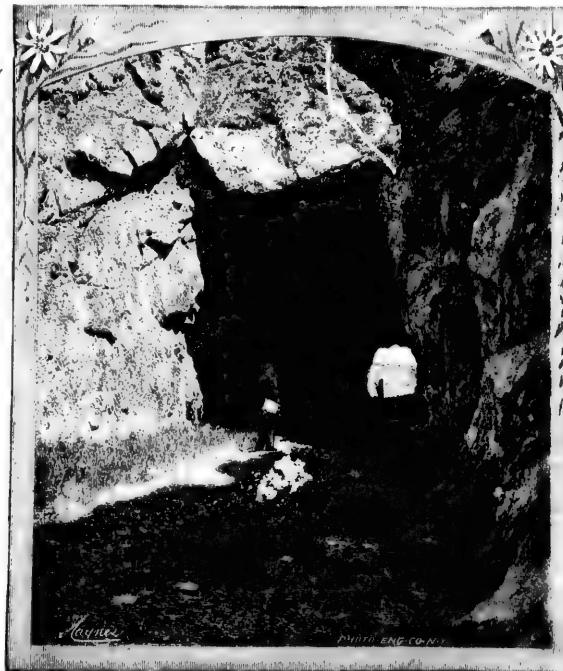
THE PIVOT ABOUT WHICH THE NEW NORTHWEST WHIRLS — PRIVATE ENTERPRISE BRINGING ORDER OUT OF THE CHAOS OF GOVERNMENT MISMANAGEMENT — HISTORY OF EFFORTS TO BUILD A RAILROAD ACROSS CANADA, ENDING IN THE FORMATION OF THE MONTREAL SYNDICATE — TERMS OF THE CONTRACT WITH GOVERNMENT — ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPANY AND BEGINNING OF WORK.

The Canadian Pacific Railway, (the syndicate has changed the first word in this corporate title from the substantive to the adjective,) is the pivot about which this country revolves, the peg upon which its hopes hang. Winnipeg talks, dreams, bows down before, speculates on and lives in the midst of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Notwithstanding the prosperity which had begun to grow here before the railway arrived, and which I have tried to show had a political origin, the average Winnipegger treats the railway as the fountain head of his material happiness and the arbiter of his municipal and private destinies. The Canadian Pacific Management is the moloch to which every inhabitant of the Province turns his appealing or propitiating gaze, and the syndicate is a vastly more important institution than the Dominion Cabinet at Ottawa in the local estimation. Perhaps some of this curious sentiment is to be attributed to a habit of worshipping a great corporation contracted by the provincials when the Hudson Bay Company was the absolute monarch of their territory; but certainly a large share of it has grown naturally out of the commanding position which the transcontinental railway enterprise has suddenly assumed in the hands of the Montreal Syndicate. From a feeble and mismanaged

government undertaking, dragging slowly over wasted years and lavishing countless sums of public money without visible result, the Canadian Pacific has became a gigantic private enterprise, liberally subsidized by the Government, but vigorously conducted by railway managers who have demonstrated their ability by brilliant success in similar gigantic undertakings. As a government work, the construction of a railway across the Canadian part of the American continent wrecked two successive ministries and nearly bankrupted the Dominion treasury. As a private enterprise, it promises speedily to bind together the scattered Provinces of the Canadian Confederation with ties of iron, to open and develop an immense empire of the richest agricultural lands in British America, and to enrich not only its directors but millions of people who shall settle along its line, cultivate the broad acres it is bringing into the market and feed the world with grain to be transported to the seaboard over its completed lines. It is impossible to write much about the Northwest without discussing the Canadian Pacific, and it is really worth while to sketch the history of an enterprise which has taken such a commanding position.

The Canadian Pacific Railway owes its origin to a political necessity. It was an obvious consequence of the confederation of the Canadian Provinces. It was pledged to the distant Province of British Columbia as a condition of her entrance to the Dominion. It was, besides, a clear essential to the unity and homogeneity of the outer Provinces. The confederation was scarcely completed before the Federal Government set about the preliminary surveys for the work. These were prolonged and expensive under the wasteful system characteristic of government work. From \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000 were spent and 40,000 or 50,000 miles of surveys and observations completed between 1871, when the Northwest was annexed to the confederation, and 1878, when the Government practically relinquished the work. This time and money was not actually lost, though most of the line located by the Government will be abandoned by the syndicate. These surveys, added to previous explorations like those of Prof. Hinds, Prof. Macoun and Capt. Palliser, form the basis of the subsequent work by the present managers. The line, as finally located by the Government, began at Lake Nipissing, the

terminus of the projected Canada Central from Ottawa, and stretched across the desert of rock and morass, north and east of Lake Superior, to Selkirk on the Red River. There was a so-called branch to Thunder Bay on the lake, which was to be really the main line, with Thunder Bay for the eastern terminus, for several years, or at least till the prairie section was built. West of Selkirk the line struck northeasterly through the fertile country of the little Saskatchewan, a tributary of the Assinini-



RAILWAY TUNNEL AT RAT PORTAGE.

boine, and the Swan River, an inlet of Lake Manitoba, and kept on, at the cost of some heavy constructions over morasses, to Battleford, on the North Saskatchewan, and Edmonton, on the upper course of the same stream, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. The purpose of this line was to follow the fertile belt of the old explorers and avoid the country south of the South Saskatchewan, which they had condemned as arid

plains. Several routes through the rocky barrier of the mountains were discussed, and there were strong advocates for a sharp turn northward, to reach the Peace River country, with its magnificent agricultural capabilities and mineral resources, and to find an outlet to some of the more northerly British Columbia harbors through the break in the mountain wall made by its valley. The route finally chosen, however, was through Yellow Head pass, 3,646 feet above sea level, somewhat south of the latitude of Edmonton, to Bute or Burrard inlet, on the Pacific coast. The work of construction was begun in 1875, and within three years more than 100 miles of road was built on each end of the difficult Thunder Bay division, nearly 100 miles was built west of Selkirk, and a beginning was made in British Columbia.

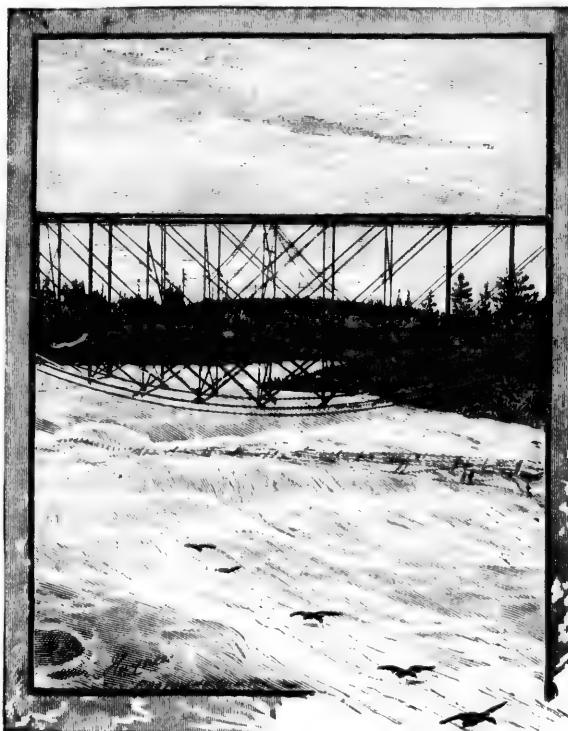
The first notable check to the prosecution of the work by the Government was the great Canada Pacific parliamentary scandal of 1872, which caused the fall of the Macdonald Cabinet and elevated Mr. Mackenzie and the Liberals to power. This belongs to the history of Canada, not to that of the Canadian Pacific. It is enough to note that the influence of the scandal clung to and crippled the Mackenzie Government in the prosecution of the enterprise. Repeated efforts made to interest private capital in the enterprise were defeated by this consideration and the prevailing business depression. When the Liberals finally fell from power in 1879, upon the tariff question, it was considered that the extravagant expense of the railroad had indirectly led to the event, by impoverishing the treasury and embarrassing the finances. At any rate, when Sir John Macdonald returned to power he suspended work on the road, and sought for private enterprise and capital to take it off his hands.

In the meantime events were preparing for just this emergency in another quarter. A great railway system had suddenly grown up just across the line in the United States, controlled by Canadian capital, and in close alliance with the commercial interests of the British Northwest. In 1877 and 1878 James J. Hill, then an un conspicuous partner in a Red River transportation company, now the most famous railroad monarch west of Chicago, conceived the bold plan of taking the St. Paul and Pacific out of its morass of bankruptcy and erecting it into a new and inde-

pendent system. He interested George Stephen, president, and R. B. Angus, director of the Bank of Montreal, in his plan, and their capital and his skill corralled the bonds of the bankrupt road, and led through a thorny path of litigation to its reorganization, with Stephen as president and Hill as general manager. It only took a year or two for Hill to fill the Red River Valley with his ambitious lines, and call a branch of the Canadian Pacific down from Selkirk to the international boundary to connect with him, bringing Winnipeg and the isolated section of the Canadian Pacific into commercial relations with the world through the United States. Then, when Sir John Macdonald looked for capable and willing hands into which to unload his Canada Pacific white elephant in 1880, the managers of the now wealthy, prosperous and successful St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba appeared as candidates. The ministerial and parliamentary negotiations at Ottawa are too recent to need recounting here. Their familiar result was the formation of a syndicate to undertake the construction of the Canadian Pacific road within ten years, and the prairie section within three years, in which the Bank of Montreal capitalists were the largest shareholders, and Manager Hill an influential director.

This syndicate received a land grant of every alternate section for 24 miles on either side of its line, amounting to 25,000,000 acres, and a practical indorsement of their bonds to the amount of \$25,000,000, besides an absolute gift of the completed sections of the road. That is to say, the government turns over to the syndicate the road now in operation, and undertakes to complete the part now under contract in British Columbia and between Thunder Bay and Selkirk. Of course, the heaviest labor this imposed upon government was the completion of the gap in the Thunder Bay section, now reduced to about 100 miles. The entire amount of completed road to be finally turned over by the government to the syndicate is 700 miles, valued at \$28,000,000. This makes the entire value of the government aid, estimating the land at \$2 per acre, \$103,000,000. This looks like a big subsidy, but in reality it is much less than those offered by the Dominion to parties who have previously failed in attempts to build the road. The famous Sir Hugh Allan charter, which broke down upon the exposure of corrupt

practices, granted \$50,000,000 in cash and lands to the value of \$109,000,000. The Mackenzie plan of 1874, which was not accepted by any company capable of building the line, offered the same amount of land and cash and bond subsidies amounting to \$50,747,500. The latter act also subsidized branch lines, which the syndicate must build at its own expense. The syndicate receives certain incidental privileges from the government,



CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY BRIDGE—OVER WINNIPEG RIVER.

such as exemption from taxation of its right of way, depot buildings in unsettled country, and its lands until sold, and exemption from duty of materials used in construction. On the other hand, it must submit to government regulation of its tariffs.

Quick to seize its magnificent opportunity, the syndicate took possession of its domain early in the year 1881, and is now in

the full tide of energetic construction. The feeble and dilatory methods of government work have been replaced by the trained energy of practical railroad builders, and the expensive theorists of the old regime have been superseded by the cream of the younger generation of pushing and capable railroad men, trained in the admirable school of the northwestern United States.

The syndicate staff are established at Winnipeg in commodious offices above the Montreal Bank building, except the chief engineer, whose headquarters are in the buckboard, and are bringing order out of the chaos they found. They are operating the completed road with a heavy traffic, and apparently with profit, and are pushing the construction with surprising energy. Between Thunder Bay and Winnipeg the government are completing the line under contract already let according to the agreement with the syndicate. I have written something about this wild country and difficult construction in a former letter. West of Winnipeg the syndicate have made some important changes. The first is to abandon Selkirk and select Winnipeg as a base of operations, whereby the former place is losing its population and falling into ruin, while the latter is growing to metropolitan proportions. Then the syndicate has abandoned the whole line of the government survey, and even torn up a large section of the finished track. The new line leaves the old one at Portage la Prairie, and strikes south up to the Assiniboine Valley by Qu'Appelle. The line thus avoids the swampy country south of Lake Manitoba. It ventures into the "arid region" of the old surveyors, but so far the engineers have found the land admirably adapted for settlement.

It is provided in the railroad act of Parliament that the line shall cross the mountains at Yellow Head Pass, but the syndicate engineers are looking for a better passage, and if they find one probably it will not be difficult to secure a modification of the act in this respect. The line may then skirt the Rocky Mountains northward to the Pine River Pass, or seek some other more practicable passage through the formidable barrier than that selected by the government engineers. In any case a branch line will probably be built ultimately north of the fertile Peace River region. The location of the line in British Columbia seems to be settled by the act of 1881, under which the government

is to build nearly 200 miles from Fort Moody, on the coast opposite Vancouver Island, up to the valley of the Frazer River to Kamloops. Of this 128 miles from Yale to Kamloops along the valley is now under contract. Much heavy work has been done and a few miles near Yale have been ironed. The most difficult section, ninety miles across the Cascade Mountains, from the coast of Yale, is to be put under contract this summer. Wherever the syndicate line crosses the mountains it must take such a course as to meet the government line at Kamloops. The length of the old government line was 2,200 miles, 400 in the Thunder Bay, 1,200 in the valley and 600 in the British Columbia section. Of course the new line cannot yet be measured, but it is certainly much shorter.



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## VII.

### THE PRAIRIE JOURNEY BEGUN.

BY RAIL WESTWARD TO THE END OF THE TRACK — THE BEGINNING OF A FIVE HUNDRED MILE TRIP BY WAGON — ACROSS THE SETTLED SECTION OF THE ASSINNIBOINE VALLEY TO BRANDON — PIONEER EXPERIENCES AND PROFITS — THE WESTWARD MARCH OF IMMIGRATION — PRAIRIES, MARSHES AND SAND HILLS.

I tried to see with my own eyes some small fraction of the prairie empire that rolls west of the Red River to the foot of the Rocky Mountains. In pursuance of this laudable endeavor I traveled some 350 miles west of Winnipeg, and nearly 300 miles west of the present terminal point of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The route lay from Portage la Prairie, the end of the track, up the Assinniboine Valley to Brandon, from thence further up the valley on the south side to Fort Ellice; from that point up the Qu'Appelle Valley to Qu'Appelle Post. Fort Ellice, the oldest and best known point upon the journey, is a Hudson Bay Company's post, about a century old, established near the junction of the Assinniboine and Qu'Appelle Rivers. It is scarcely one-fourth of the distance from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains. It was and still is an important distributing point in the system of the Hudson Bay Company's trade, though the last located line of the Canadian Pacific Railway passes it upon the other side. I should say something about these various lines of railway to explain the peculiar manner in which the country is settling up. The line located by the first Canada Pacific Company—that chartered by the old Mackenzie

Government—shot wildly off to the north of Lake Manitoba through the swamps and forests of the eastern edge of the Winnipeg basin. The second line, located under the authority of the Macdonald government, ran with more reason nearly due west of Selkirk, through the rich Riding Mountain, Little Saskatchewan and Swan River regions, turning sharply northward towards the Saskatchewan near the longitude of Fort Ellice. About 100 miles of this line was built, and gave an impetus to settlement in this direction that has strung a line of prosperous towns along the north bank of the Assinniboine as far as the Qu'Appelle. When the syndicate assumed control of this work it abandoned this line in turn, and adopted another which hugs closely the north bank of the river for some 150 miles, then crosses it at Grand Valley, and follows the south bank and the Qu'Appelle River in the direction of Qu'Appelle Mission for some time, skirting and finally plunging boldly into the region which the old explorers set down as arid, treeless and barren. This line follows quite closely the old cart trail, used for hundreds of years for freighting into the interior. I followed this trail upon my journey, and was scarcely ever out of sight of the railway stakes for more than a few miles at a time. It is well here to make the general statement, with all deference to the old explorers, that I have seen scarcely a foot of land that either is not already fit for agricultural production, or can be made so by some simple appliances of modern civilization. Some land is wet, and needs draining; other lacks fuel, which the railroad will bring; and still other is better adapted for grazing than cultivation; but it is all farming land in the broad sense.

I left Winnipeg upon a certain Tuesday morning, meeting at the train by appointment my camera-bearing companion on the Lake Winnipeg trip, and a person said to be familiar with the route to Qu'Appelle, in whose care we placed ourselves for the journey. The railroad part of the trip, some sixty miles to Portage la Prairie, on the Assinniboine, was quickly completed. The line runs, for the most part, through a rich prairie, dotted plentifully with low shrubs, which will require draining to make it fit for general agriculture. It already affords excellent hay, and at one point, Stony Mountain, the general level gradually rises to the foot of a sharp bluff, fifty or sixty feet high, supplying

admirable conditions for a grazing farm. The Provincial penitentiary and insane asylum is located here, and those conditions are partly utilized by the maintenance of a fine herd of tamed buffalo, which graze upon the hillside, and are attended by the lunatics. Most of the land along this line is held by speculators who obtained it from the old company, and has not come under cultivation. There are two parallel lines of settlement, however, to the north and south of it, almost within sight of the cars. One follows the Assinniboine River and the other the old line of road, until they meet on the Little Saskatchewan and continue up the Assinniboine beyond Fort Ellice. South of both of these another line of settlements stretches along the boundary line from the Pembina to the Turtle Mountain in about the longitude of the Grand Valley. Both of these regions will probably be served by lines of railway at no distant day, the southern by the Manitoba & Southwestern, and the northern by a northwestern branch of the Canadian Pacific.

The new line of railway strikes the Assinniboine and the settlements together at Portage la Prairie, the largest town in the Northwest outside of Winnipeg, and the center of the most prosperous agricultural community in the Province. About ten miles from the river the marshy meadows begin to rise into a beautiful, level prairie, as rich in soil as anything in the Red River Valley, and as highly cultivated as any land in Dakota. This prairie, of about ten miles in extent each way, is mostly cut up into small farms, which are carefully cultivated, and now bear an exceedingly promising crop of wheat. The town of Portage la Prairie has about 1,500 inhabitants, nearly all the additions of the last two years; is regularly laid out with wide streets and buildings that are beginning to assume a solid, permanent appearance. This is the present terminus of the railway, though the track is laid twenty miles farther; and here our party fitted out for an overland journey of some 300 miles farther west. Our train, when completed, consisted of a spring wagon drawn by two shaggy native ponies, and a buck-board drawn by a third, both loaded with tent, blankets, canned meats and other supplies, and driven, one by our guide and the other by his culinary assistant, who added the virtues of a hostler to his own. It took some time to get this motley train in order,

and it was Wednesday afternoon before we turned our faces to the west. Mr. La Touche Tupper, government inspector of telegraph for the Northwest, left Portage at the same time on an overland trip to Battleford, and the two parties often camped and drove together upon the journey. I am indebted to him for much information about the country; as also to Mr. John Bangs, Dominion land guide, who accompanied us to Brandon.



RAILROAD CUT ON THE THUNDER BAY SECTION.

The first ten miles of our journey was over the same beautiful prairie, dotted with improved farms and covered with growing crops, that we traversed by rail. This extends along the Assiniboine from Portage to Rat Creek, a narrow, winding, muddy affluent, much like the Sheyenne in Dakota. On this creek we were shown the house of a Mr. McKenzie, a thrifty Scotchman,

who was a pioneer settler fifteen years ago, and is now the richest farmer in this region. He came here from Ontario with some capital, invested it prudently, and now, with his sons, owns about 40,000 acres of land in various farms. On the west side of Rat Creek the prairie changes to meadow land, which continues with some interruptions to the sand hills, some thirty miles. All the country from Winnipeg to Qu'Appelle may be classified into these four sorts, prairie, meadow land, sand hills and high plain. I may as well describe each minutely once, as I meet it first, and avoid endless repetition. The prairie, in its wild state, is a level plain without any timber of any sort, but covered with a luxuriant growth of grass, flowers and wild legumes that grow in the richest soil. When broken with the plow it shows a rich, black soil, from one to three feet deep, with a clay subsoil, capable of producing grain and vegetables in the greatest profusion and perfection. The average yield of wheat on the Portage Prairie is thirty bushels, and as all grown finds a ready home market, the farmers are waxing prosperous. Meadow land, such as we found on each side of Portage Prairie, is less level than the prairie, being broken with small lakes and sloughs about which there is often a growth of scrubby timber. The soil is black and wet, but requires draining to fit it for cultivation. It yields excellent wild hay, however, and with the natural drainage that comes from railroads and settlements, will doubtless become fine grazing and farming land.

From Rat Creek the trail, which is here a well beaten road, traversed by all the freighters' trains to Ellice, Battleford and Edmonton, strikes nearly due west to the bend northward of the Assiniboine valley. We stopped for the night at the house of Mr. Cook, an English immigrant, whose experience is suggestive of the capabilities of the country. He came here only two years ago, and took up half a section of land under the homestead and pre-emption laws, with no other capital than his hands. Now he has a farm worth about \$4,000, with seventy acres in wheat last year, a considerable herd of cattle and comfortable buildings. His house, like all between Portage and Grand Valley, is of poplar logs. Leaving here early Thursday morning, we traversed some twenty miles of meadow to the beginning of the famous sand hills, which have puzzled geologists

and discouraged settlers ever since the country was first penetrated by the white man. Here they lie along both sides of the river for ten or fifteen miles. These sand hills are not so formidable as the descriptions of travelers had led me to expect. The name conveys the notion of barren mounds of shifting sand, glistening in the sun and tossed about by the winds. Instead of that, we saw a succession of rounded eminences covered with grass and clothed with a growth of the largest and most varied timber we had seen upon the river. The Assiniboine, which flows a few miles south of the trail, is not so heavily wooded here as higher up. There were some respectable groves at Portage, but in general the only forest growth was the scrubby poplar of the meadows. Here, in the sand hills, was not only a growth of poplar large enough for the primitive uses of the settlers, but not a little dwarf oak and some scattered spruce. The black sand, mixed with loam, of which the hills are composed, is only exposed where the road breaks through the thin turf and on some partly denuded summits. The hills are rarely more than forty feet high. Between them are sometimes fertile hay meadows, near some of which adventurous settlers have located. The trail winds through these wooded hills in a circuitous fashion, occasionally skirting a meadow and presenting more agreeable variety of surface and shade than any other part of the prairie route.

Geologists have speculated a good deal on these hills, but the most rational theory of their origin I have seen is that which supposes their successive ridges, crossing the country in a north and south line, to be the successive western shores of the great inland lake, which once occupied this great prairie region and gradually dried up in the course of ages, as the land rose and its waters found an outlet to Hudson Bay. These hills are believed to have been piled up by the wind upon its shore, as sand hills are even now heaped up on the shores of Lake Ontario, and the flat prairies and meadows that lie between them may be the ancient lake bottom, exposed in periodical rapid recessions of its waters. Though these sand hills support considerable vegetation of a certain sort, they will never be fit for agricultural lands, though they may be adapted for grazing purposes. The meadows, and even the hill sides, grow a coarse grass, and

civilized enterprise may supply the lack of water by wells. The water in all this prairie region, except in a small belt of alkali country east of Ellice, is good for stock and even where surface water is scarce, it can be obtained with ease by digging shallow wells. Before leaving the sand hills, one fact should be noted of interest to Americans. The Canadian government has utilized a part of them south of the river, as a reservation for the Sioux



OX TRAIN ON THE PRAIRIE TRAIL.

refugees, who fled to Canada after the Minnesota massacre in 1863. A wandering band of these was encamped at Portage la Prairie when we were there. In spite of their bloody record, it must be confessed they were tall, striking looking fellows, a remarkable contrast to the fat, greasy or wrinkled Chippewas native to the country.

Some fifty or sixty miles from Portage la Prairie, the trail suddenly leaves the sand hills, and, mounting a gentle declivity, shows the traveler a highland plain, spreading out before him as far as the eye can reach, covered with thick, waving grass, and bespangled with flowers, where these natural beauties have not given place to the rich brown of the broken soil, or the darker green of the waving wheat. This is the Big Prairie, or Beautiful Prairie of local tradition. It extends some thirty or forty miles along the river, and is about ten miles wide at its narrowest part. It is as rich as the Portage Prairie, and nearly as densely populated since the rush of immigration within the past two years. The part we crossed, though only two years settled, was covered with farms with substantial buildings, good fences, and the best wheat I had seen that year anywhere, well headed out and almost ready to ripen. The farmers with whom I hurriedly talked told me the soil was of marvellous richness, and, so far as their brief experience went, certain to produce twenty-five to thirty bushels to the acre of the best wheat. For this there is an insatiate home demand at prices ranging from \$1 to \$1.25 per bushel. One of the most notable advantages of this country is its home market for agricultural produce. With the demands of the Hudson Bay Company and the government for shipment to trading posts and Indian reservations farther west, and the needs of incoming settlers for seed and food, this region will import breadstuffs for many years, and producers are sure to find a home market at higher prices than could be realized for export. The home market for oats is even better than that for wheat. We could hardly get grain for our horses, and the railroad contractors were importing oats for the use of their beasts. Oats sold for \$1 per bushel, which with a yield of fifty to seventy bushels per acre, makes a prairie farm a mine of wealth.

We camped on this prairie on Thursday night, and traversed the rest of it next morning. The tract we crossed lies between Pine Creek, a clear, deep and rapid, though narrow stream, on east, and a low range of sand hills on the west. This stream, like all we crossed to the west of Rat Creek, was clear and sweet, unlike the muddy tributaries of the Red River. This prairie is abundantly watered. Where there are no streams, wells twenty feet deep supply the coldest and finest water. It is

the trail declivity, he him as grass, and have not the darker. Beauti- or forty narrow- early as the past settled, fences, headed I hur- and, so enty-five there is 1.25 per country is hands of ment to e needs import a home . The t. We ractors sold for gels per

comparatively well wooded, too, along the streams and the narrow ridges of sand hills that cross it. Altogether, the Beautiful Prairie is the most inviting spot I had yet seen in the Northwest. West of where we crossed it, the line of settlements from Winnipeg, interrupted for a few miles by the sand hills, stretches away along the river to Ellice, through the thriving new towns of Rapid City, Minnedosa, Birtle, etc. Crossing the range of sand hills before spoken of, our road the rest of the way to the river, some fifteen miles, led across a different sort of country, a high and level or rolling plain, with a lighter, somewhat sandy soil, covered with a growth of grass less luxuriant than the true prairie, and with stony ridges here and there. We found endless miles of this plain west of the river. It is what the old explorers described an arid desert, but it has water enough to support abundant animal and vegetable life; the best of it is good farming land, and the worst fit for grazing. At any rate, settlers were taking it up so eagerly that there was no government land left on the line of the railroad this side of Grand Valley. The road is pushing forward very rapidly over the section of country just described. At the time of our journey grading was completed continuously through the sand hills, and only a few gaps remained to be closed to the river. The track-layers were some thirty miles west of Portage, and expected to be in Grand Valley by September.

It was about the middle of Friday afternoon, the second day after leaving Portage, that we drove down the sloping sides of the Assinniboine Valley to the crossing of the river at Grand Valley, that and the town of Brandon on the other side lying spread out before us like a panorama, with the winding river half out of its bank with the June rise, lying between.



## VIII.

### THE UPPER ASSINNIBOINE VALLEY.

THE MAGIC TOWN OF BRANDON—A CITY BORN ON THE PRAIRIE IN A NIGHT—ITS APPEARANCE AT EIGHT WEEKS OLD—THE RIDE UP THE VALLEY TO FORT ELICE—SOIL, MOSQUITOES AND FREIGHTERS' CARTS—ELICE AND ITS BEAUTIFUL SITUATION—FUTURE GROWTH OF TIMBER ON THE PRAIRIES—SETTLEMENTS NORTH OF THE RIVER.

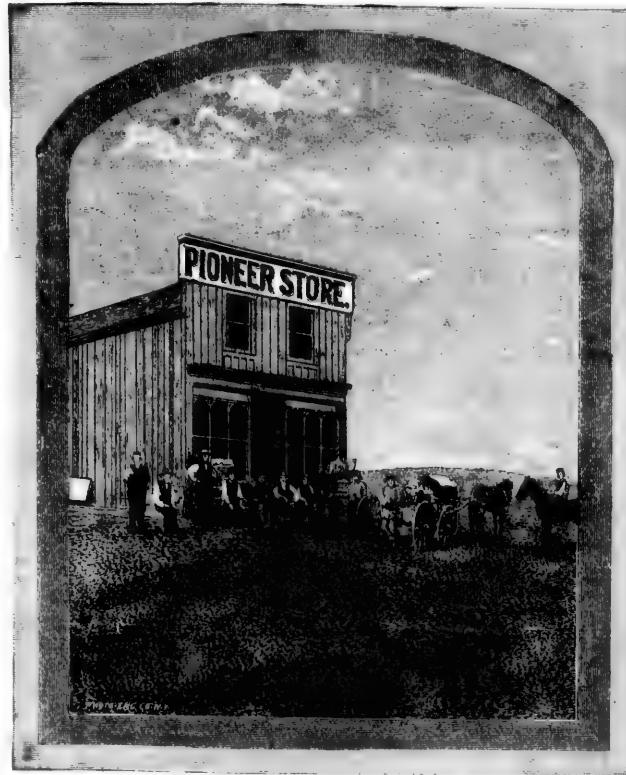
I left our wagon train on the brow of the bluff overlooking Grand Valley and the crossing of the Assinniboine. Here we got the first effective view of the Assinniboine after leaving Winnipeg. At Portage la Prairie the river creeps through a marshy bed a mile and a half from the town, and is separated from it by a slough, probably its former bed, now full of water. At Grand Valley the river flows some 150 feet wide in a bed sufficiently well defined, though the high waters in June obscure it somewhat, with a rapid current, and deep enough for the purposes of steamboat navigation. The banks slope gradually back to the prairie land, perhaps 100 feet above the water, leaving a flat or bottom on the east side, which may be a mile wide when it is not half covered with water, as was the case when we were there. On this flat stands the town of Grand Valley, an ambitious place before it was eclipsed by its rival on the west bank, Brandon; and drowned out by the flood of June. In July, 1881, it looked forlorn and discouraged. It had some twenty slight frame houses and tents, half of them in the water, and some washed by the flood far from their original location. The postoffice and several stores stood in the middle of the river, apparently, and could be reached only by boats, and

the western end of the ferry was inaccessible to foot passengers. The railroad propose to bridge the river here with as little delay as possible, but it will be a task of much cost and difficulty.

We consumed all the afternoon in getting over the river and camped for the night on a corner lot in Brandon. Brandon is one of those miracles of mushroom growth that spring up as if by magic in scarcely more than a single night at favorable points upon a new railroad. It was only two months before I was there that the railroad company announced the purpose of locating a station and town at Brandon and began to sell business lots at auction. In a few days the railroad company was \$120,000 richer and several hundred enterprising speculators had town lots on their hands which had cost them from \$70 to \$400 apiece. Of course no time was lost in utilizing such costly property and in two weeks the first store was up. When we were there, the town had some forty or fifty houses, some of them large and well built, but most of them temporary frame stores or claim shanties. There must have been three or four hundred people living where two months before was naked prairie. The town is finely located for future growth, upon high ground, with the river flowing close under the low bluff at the steamboat landing and withdrawing a little distance lower down, leaving a dry flat where the railway buildings are to be erected. When the railway is built beyond, Brandon will certainly become an important shipping and distributing point. This is the best place I saw to note the evidence of immigration crowding into the country, which could be seen more or less all along the line. Here the swarm of strangers was thickest and the competition for the worms that await the early bird in a new country sharpest. Most of the settlers come from Ontario, though there are some from other Eastern Provinces, the States and Great Britain. Some twenty or thirty miles west of Brandon was at that time the limit within which all the government lands were taken up, but this was rapidly advancing westward. This was about the western limit of settlement in the Province south of the Assinniboine. Turtle Mountain, nearly due south of Brandon, is about the western limit of the line of settlement in the fertile country just north of the boundary. There is good country west of here, however, in the latitude of Turtle Mountain, as far as the Souris River, and along

its tributary, the Pipestone, which is not far south of the railway line. At Oak lake, on this river, there were already the beginnings of a settlement, and it was thought the summer of 1882 will see a great rush into the Pipestone country.

Riding out of Brandon about 10 o'clock Saturday morning, we entered upon the most monotonous part of the journey — the



THE FIRST BUILDING IN BRANDON.

great plain that lies south of the Assinniboine, and stretches off to join the great plain of the Souris. The trail, closely followed by the railroad line, traverses this plain from ten to twenty miles from the river. As soon as the timber upon its banks becomes large enough to be conspicuous, which is a short distance above

Brandon, one can see its dark line almost constantly upon the right; upon the left, the Brandon Hills, a commanding elevation two or three hundred feet high, are the most conspicuous objects south of Brandon, at first flanked to the west by a low range of sand hills. Between these the plain, after rising rapidly from the river, seems to stretch off interminably upon an apparent level. The soil is something like that just east of the river, but having rather less black sand mixed with the surface loam, and a more decided clay subsoil nearer the surface. There are stony ridges here and there, where long lines of granite boulders seem to have been dropped by glaciers or floating ice, as well as single erratic boulders scattered over the surface. There is water in surface sloughs, and lakes and wood on the widely separated streams and on the sand hills. Altogether the country very closely resembles the Missouri plain between the river and the James Valley, except that the water is better, and it has more wood. The success of the wheat farms lately established west of Bismarck makes it clear, I think, that wheat can be successfully raised here. Anyway, the country is being rapidly taken up. We saw breaking and claim shanties thirty miles west of Brandon, and the settler must go nearly as far as that to find government land open to entry.

We camped Saturday night some thirty miles from Brandon with a party of railroad engineers, who had just completed the location of a trial line connecting with another section to the west. This party of engineers was in charge of Mr. Charles Shaw, who has traveled a great deal over the region south of the Assinniboine, and whom I am indebted for some useful information and intelligent observations. After ten miles more of rather wet prairie, we entered the same range of sand hills we had seen to the left all day Saturday, which here curves about towards the river. They resemble those east of the Assinniboine, except that they are lower and wetter, with somewhat smaller timber. Like those they may some time be utilized for grazing purposes. These were ten to fifteen miles across, and, as we came out of them, we ascended a rather sharp slope to a high, slightly rolling prairie which continued all the way to Ellice. This is crossed by two or three streams whose deep waters and worn banks testify to the increasing elevation of the plain, and whose waters are

pure and sweet. Besides these there are sloughs of surface water every few miles, varying from mere bog holes to small lakes. Sometimes, in spite of the elevation, the sloughs expand into grass-covered marshes, thousands of acres in extent. Lack of timber is the great drawback to this region, but observations made at Fort Ellice and other points demonstrated that the treeless condition of the plains is solely owing to the annual prairie fires, and that when these are checked by settlement timber will soon grow spontaneously. The soil was rather light upon leaving the sand hills but increases in richness toward Ellice. There is one point in particular just to the west of a considerable stream called Gopher Creek, where the plain is most inviting in appearance. As far as the eye can reach it lies so level that a wagon may be driven in any direction as easily as upon a trail, and so rich that in some parts the grass is almost hidden by the luxuriant growth of flowers. No settler had yet penetrated thus far, but at no distant time this plain will support a prosperous, if not dense, agricultural population.

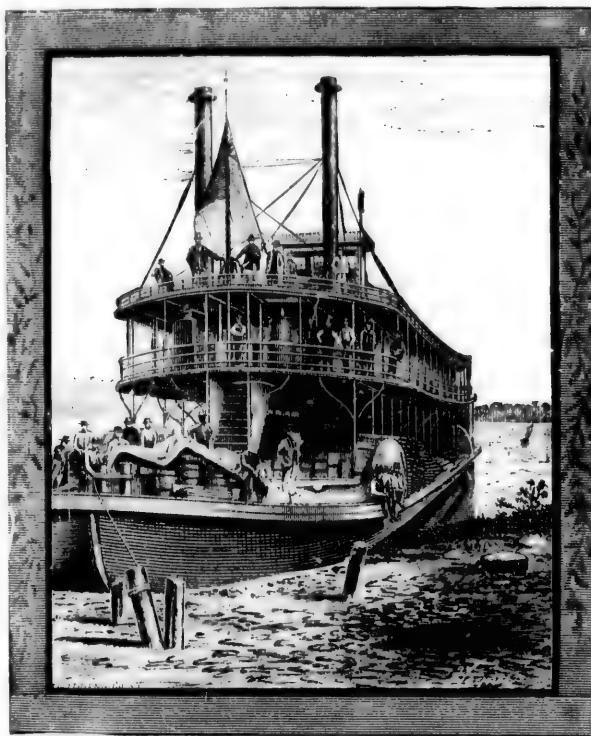
We made one camp on this plain which will be a memory of horror through all the future lives of every member of the party. It was upon a bare eminence at the side of a grass-grown slough from which we got water for culinary purposes, and from which arose, as the shades of evening fell, such a devastating insect horde as has never been seen since the last grasshopper raid. We had seen mosquitoes before on the trip, but being well protected, had not suffered from them, but this swarm defied smudges, penetrated netting and resisted attacks with hand and brush. They buzzed around the tent like a swarm of bees and rattled against it like a shower of rain. About 2 o'clock they broke into it in such numbers as to drive us out, to find that the horses picketed on the plain had been stampeded and all but one were beyond reach. The rest of the night was devoted to finding the lost stock, all but our spare pony, who was never seen again, and in the morning we turned our swollen and mottled faces to the west and left the enemy in possession of the field.

On this prairie, and, indeed, all the way from Portage to Qu'Appelle, we were given daily proof of the surprising amount of traffic already existing between Winnipeg and the interior by

the long lines of Red River carts that we met and passed. These trains, conducted for the most part by half-breed freighters, carry all supplies between the Hudson Bay posts and interior settlements and Winnipeg. The company formerly monopolized the trade, but the settlements are beginning to consume great quantities of goods. It is estimated that 1,000 carts left Winnipeg in the spring of 1881 besides those of the company, carrying supplies of food, clothing, groceries, dry goods, and agricultural and other tools, to the new settlements in the far interior. A great many of the carts were loaded with reapers, plows, threshing machines and fanning mills. Sometimes the trains are made up of settlers instead of freighters. One long train of carts drawn by oxen and ponies mixed, was conducted by a half-breed, who was moving with all his cumbrous household goods and a great herd of stock to the Bow River country, to open a stock ranch. Others were bound for the Saskatchewan. The trail by which we started from Portage is the trunk line to the interior, from which branches spread out from time to time to Fort Pelly, Edmonton, Battleford and other places in the interior. Besides the carts, the trail was filled from time to time with great herds of cattle driving to the interior, to be sold for beef and breeding purposes. The stock is mostly bought in Minnesota and Ontario. The cattle trade of this region is already very important, and is rapidly growing more so. The Hudson Bay Company's trade consumes a great deal of meat. To this is now added the needs of the railway workmen and of the rapidly increasing settlers, who seldom bring much stock with them, and, of course, cannot start herds under two or three years. The men who first seize the opportunity offered by the natural advantages of this region to start large stock farms will find an eager market and almost certain wealth.

Late in the afternoon of Monday, the third day after leaving Brandon, our train drew near Fort Ellice. We found the trail turning northward towards the river and were warned by the precipitous banks of the creeks we crossed of the depth of the valley we were approaching. None of the strangers to the country were prepared for the striking spectacle that presented itself to their eyes, accustomed to the dull monotony of prairie scenery, as the road, after winding through a thick growth of

timber, suddenly emerged upon the brink of the valley. The Assinniboine here flows through a valley nearly two miles wide and 250 feet below the level of the plain. A short distance above the post it is joined by the valley of the Qu'Appelle River, and just below by the valley of Beaver Creek, along which the road enters. The sides of all the valleys are precipitous and covered



STEAMER NORTHWEST AT THE BRANDON LANDING.

with a thick forest, and the view from the brink is picturesque and striking in the extreme. The post, a quadrangle of low buildings, stands on the edge of the valley commanding a lovely view of the rich bottom lands below, with the company's farm, the steamboat landing, stores and warehouses. This is the head

of steamboat navigation on the Assinniboine. The river is over fifty feet wide here and meanders back and forth from one side to the other in the level valley like a ribbon of silver. The post is an important one, having jurisdiction over several subordinate posts, and doing a considerable trade. The plain before the buildings is full of carts, which are constantly arriving and departing, and there is a large camp of half-breed freighters, as well as the inevitable village of lazy and begging Indians. The officer in charge of the post is Mr. Archibald McDonald. He gave me one very instructive piece of information: that the thick timber which clothes the valley sides has nearly all grown up within the last ten years—since the partial settlement of the country and the making of a net-work of beaten trails has checked the annual prairies fires. This statement was confirmed by a reference to the text and illustrations of Prof. Hind's account of the Assinniboine Valley, written twenty-three years ago. The promise that settlement will clothe these naked prairies with forests has a very important bearing upon the future of this region.

There is little settlement on the south bank of the Assinniboine near Ellice, though one can see the green bluffs on the opposite side dotted with new houses as far as the eye can reach. This is the continuation of the line of settlement north of the river, before alluded to. The wave of emigration along this line reached the Little Saskatchewan, thirty miles below, four years ago, and Rapid City was founded. It steadily advanced, and the younger towns of Minnedosa and Birtle have sprung up in its course. The vanguard kept on, and the last settler's house is now four miles above Ellice. This is not the limit of present habitation northwestward, by any means. I met at Fort Ellice one of the proprietors of a saw mill and flouring mill at Prince Albert, on the Saskatchewan, 600 miles from its mouth, who told me they had a settlement there of one or two thousand people, with improved farms, and the beginning of a good lumber trade. At Edmonton, at the foot of the Rockies, on the same river, there are already old settlements and improved farms. I was told of one man who made \$20,000 in four years raising wheat, selling all his product at home, to the post and settlers.



QU'APPELLE RIVER, ABOVE THE FISHING LAKES.



## IX.

## THE VALLEY OF THE QU'APPELLE.

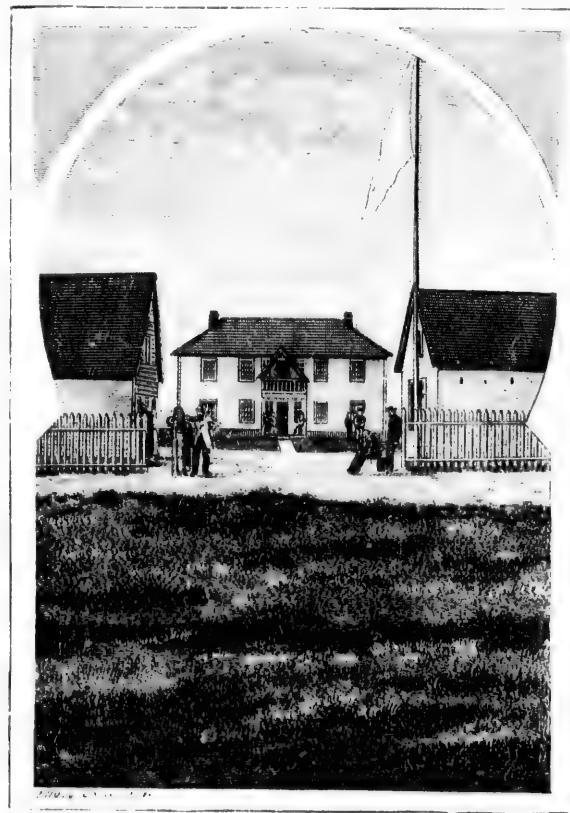
THROUGH STORM AND DESERT TO A SUNNY PRAIRIE PARADISE—A WET DAY AND NIGHT—A HUNDRED MILES OF RICH FARMING LAND WAITING FOR THE PLOW—THE POST AT QU'APPELLE—A BEAUTIFUL VALLEY AND ROSARY OF SPARKLING LAKES—SITTING BULL'S LAST CAMP.

The last stage of my prairie journey from Fort Ellice to Qu'Appelle was an ideal trip in many respects. It began amid dreary discomfort and barrenness, changed to bright, cheerful fertile surroundings, and ended at the most charming spot I have seen in Canada. Qu'Appelle is about the middle of the fishing lakes on the Qu'Appelle River, by whose windings it is 300 miles from the confluence of that stream with the Assiniboine. By trail, as nearly as distances can be determined in this region of shifting routes and loose estimates, it is 130 miles from Ellice, 240 from Brandon, 330 from Portage, and 390 from Winnipeg. The railroad will probably reduce that distance nearly one-fourth. We drove from Ellice to Qu'Appelle in three days, starting early on a Wednesday morning, just a week from the day on which we left Portage. The trail, still well beaten by the long trains of heavy carts that traverse it daily, strikes nearly due west from Ellice, and follows the Qu'Appelle Valley with something like accuracy for nearly the whole distance. For the first fifty miles, the country traversed was forbidding and unattractive. The soil was rich enough, but it was low, boggy and clothed with a rough growth of stunted semi-marsh shrubs. It is a good deal like the land east of the Red River, only rougher. It may be partly drained some time and serve as hay

meadow, but it will never be taken for agricultural land by any one who pushes on through it as we did and sees what lies beyond. The dreariness of the first day's journey was intensified by the first rain of the trip, a drizzling persistent storm that drenched the whole party to the skin in spite of rubber coats and blankets. We ate dinner standing in the rain with water forlornly dripping from our hat brims into the coffee cups. Perhaps a more disconsolate party of amateurs never stretched a wet tent and spread damp blankets upon sodden ground fifty miles from a human habitation, and straggled off through pouring rain and water-laden grass after remote timber, than ours, when we went into camp that night. A roaring fire soon dried and warmed us outside, however, and a hot supper did the business for the interior, and the night's rest was better than could have been expected in spite of continued rain without.

In the morning the weather improved, but the country did not until we had driven some ten or twelve miles. Then the sloughs began to disappear and the rough hummocks to be succeeded by gently rounded eminences crowned with smooth turf. We did not realize the change until, driving up on a higher hill, we saw spread before us, as far as we could see, the most beautiful prairie I have yet crossed in the Northwest. It was as fertile over large tracts as the Portage prairie, more varied in surface and better wooded. We were never out of sight of timber on the banks of the Qu'Appelle and the hills to the south, and frequently passed little clumps of trees about the water. The sloughs of the country are here changed to charming little lakes, often with firm, grassy banks, sometimes surrounded with trees. These form the principal water supply, though the tract is crossed by two considerable creeks. The prairie is roughly bounded on the south by several ranges of hills, the Weedy and Wolf Mountains, some twenty-five to thirty miles from the river, and extends as far as Qu'Appelle at least, about seventy miles. It probably reaches fifty miles further west. South of its southern ranges of hills is the great plain of the Souris, whose adaptability for settlement is yet in dispute. There will be time enough to settle it while this great tract of undoubtedly fertile land is filling up, for no settler has yet entered it, and, so far as I know, not an acre of land is yet sold.

For the first few miles of this prairie, the country is somewhat too rolling to strike the fancy of the Red River Valley farmer, though the soil is uniformly rich, being a strong, black loam, with the usual clay subsoil. There are fine level meadows on this part, however, and the little lakes are most numerous there,



POST BUILDINGS AT FORT ELICE.

making it admirably adapted for stock farming. Further on the soil becomes gradually more level, until we found whole sections smooth and apparently as well kept as a lawn. The vegetation is thick, fine grass, diversified with flowers. This was the only place on the trip where we saw the famous buffalo grass, sure sign of a fertile soil. The plain was also covered with old

buffalo trails in every description. Animal life, rare enough upon the plains at this season, is more abundant on this plain than elsewhere. We saw pheasants, plover, curlew, snipe, a dozen varieties of birds not known to the sportsman, hawks, crows and a few ducks. Crossing a creek eighteen miles from Qu'Appelle, we passed a tract of country six or eight miles wide, which is the only land for the whole seventy miles whose agricultural character is doubtful. The land is level and the soil exceeding rich, but it is heavy, cold and tenacious, and has been raised by the action of frost into small hummocks which make it like a corduroy road to drive over. The vegetation here is of a different character, the fine grass giving way to coarse weeds. Leaving this, we found the old familiar prairie, with gently rolling hills and clumps of trees, increasing in number as we approached the river, until the road wound through the most beautiful park region imaginable, with vistas of wooded hillside and meadow and occasional glimpses of the wooded banks of the river between them. The Qu'Appelle River, like the Assiniboine, flows through a valley one to two miles wide and about 250 feet below the prairie level. The banks are less wooded than those of Ellice, permitting the contour of their symmetrically rounded hills to be plainly seen. The clay of the prairie has been cut by water action into a thousand varying shapes, without a sharp angle in any of them, and all is clothed in green grass. A dry couliee, running into the river at right angles at this point makes a projecting promontory and adds to the picturesque effect.

Unlike Fort Ellice, the buildings at Qu'Appelle are within the valley, and it is necessary to descend a most precipitous wagon road to reach them. Half way down one turns a sharp corner, and comes in view of a beautiful sheet of water, filling the whole width of the valley, with white roofs shining through the trees, on either side of the small, clear and rapid stream that flows out of it. This is No. 3 of the fishing lakes, famous in the primitive annals of the Northwest. There are four of these lakes, expansions of the river, extending five or six miles along the valley. They are forty to fifty feet deep, of clear water and gravel bottom, and still full of excellent fish. When the Qu'Appelle lakes become generally known and easier of access, their softer beauties will rival

the rugged attractions of the Lake of the Woods as a Canadian watering place. The river, between Second and Third Lakes, is nearly a mile long, and in high water, some twenty-five feet wide, with sandy bottom and a swift current. There was formerly an Anglican mission on this stream, but it has been superseded by a Hudson Bay post and a mounted police station. The post is less important than that at Fort Ellice, and is in charge of Mr. Archie McLean, who was absent when we were there. Five low stucco buildings, including a comfortable residence and a meagerly supplied store, all surrounded by a stockade, comprise the post. There are fifty mounted police at the station, under command of a commissioner. These mounted police form the whole military force of the Dominion government. They number 300 in all, and their chief station is at Woody Mountain. Their nominal business is to keep the Indians in order, but their real chief occupation is the suppression of the illicit whisky trade, all exportation of traffic in Heaven's last, best gift being strictly prohibited in the Northwest Territory. The police have comfortable barracks across the stream from the fort, but live in tents on the shore in summer. The Indian agent has also a comfortable house on the same side. There are two or three large reservations near here; and, as the annual payment was near at the time we were there, the flat was covered with teepees of Crows and Santeaux, generally degenerate, uninteresting specimens of the noble red man. Sitting Bull, who was a resident of Qu'Appelle for a year or so, left two weeks before we were there. He was camped on the prairie above the post, with a beggarly following of old men and squaws, till he moved south.

Sunday was our last day at Qu'Appelle, where we camped by the river for two days to rest the horses. We spent the morning bathing on a smooth, hard, sand beach, the future Cape May of the Northwest, view hunting on the hills, where every one of a thousand rounded points offers a new vista of lake, wood, hill and plain, and looking over the farm of the mounted police, on the river flat. This farm, like that at Fort Ellice, (they are more like gardens in size and appearance,) has been brought to a high state of productiveness with very little cultivation. The cereals, esculents and all garden vegetables grow here in great

perfection and profusion. The climate is perceptibly warmer and the seasons longer than on the Red River, and the conditions of production approach those of the marvelous Saskatchewan. About 1 o'clock our equipage was packed and we painfully climbed the precipitous valley wall to retrace our 300 mile journey to the end of the railroad.

The most memorable incident of our sojourn at Qu'Appelle was a visit to the deserted camp of Sitting Bull, just before our departure, upon the bluff above the post. The notable savage has an eye for scenery certainly. His site was tastefully chosen upon a bold point of the bluff, commanding a noble outlook of perhaps ten miles up and down the valley, with the plain and post buildings in the foreground, and the two lakes, backed by wooded hills, stretching off in the distance. The ground was trodden nearly bare in spots and covered with the remains of burnt-out camp fires. Only the frame of one teepee remained standing, though the ruins of a dozen more strewed the ground. Here the forlorn old savage camped with the few ancient followers who remain faithful to him, until he broke camp to return to the United States. The artist of the party assuaged his keen disappointment at his failure to train his camera upon the wily warrior by a characteristic stroke of enterprise. He induced a greasy Cree who was shooting gophers for his supper upon the plain to pose himself majestically in the deserted teepee, and by the time this is in print all the train fiends running out of Fargo will be selling deluded passengers the only portrait ever taken of the renowned Sioux warrior, Sitting Bull.



## X.

### RETROGRADE MOVEMENTS.

THE RETURN JOURNEY TO WINNEPEG — A STARTLING AND DEADLY STORM — HEARSAY EVIDENCE AS TO PARTS OF THE PRAIRIE EMPIRE NOT PERSONALLY VISITED — THE FUTURE CATTLE RANCHES OF CANADA AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT — BRANCH LINES TO BE SURVEYED BY THE SYNDICATE, OPENING THE SASKATCHEWAN VALLEY AND THE SOURIS COAL FIELDS — PROMISE OF THE LATTER.

A route traversed twice in opposite directions presents a curiously different appearance to the traveler upon the return trip, though the objects seen are the same; but a second description of it is a twice told tale. It is enough to say of our return trip from Qu'Appelle to Winnipeg that it was made with the utmost speed that could be pounded out of our tired steeds and with no noteworthy incident until we reached Brandon. This magic city of eight weeks ago had apparently almost doubled in size during the three weeks of our absence, and buildings were madly rushing up with more haste than ever. We crossed the River from Grand Valley and spent the night there in a canvas boarding tent. Here we experienced one of the few sensations of a generally tame trip, in the shape of an electric hail and wind storm, which came whooping down the valley, tinging the sky with a livid green, lashing the river into breakers and threatening everything above ground with destruction. The finest store in Grand Valley was blown in a shapeless heap of ruins, and the whole population of the canvas boarding tent spent an hour bracing against its flimsy frame to prevent its destruction. The storm was circular, shift-

ing from west to east in an hour's time and blowing with a force not easy to conceive. An engineer's camp near by was struck by lightning ; six men stunned and two killed.

The morning dawned clear after the storm, and twenty-four hours' driving with a fresh team brought us to the end of the railroad track, where we hoped to catch on to a construction



SITTING BULL'S LAST CAMP.

train. More fortunate than our hopes, we found the directors' car of the Canadian Pacific, and, responding to a courteous invitation, underwent the most rapid revolution in traveling surroundings in the history of our journey. From the hardships, discomfort and dirt of prairie travel ; from comfortless buckboards, tired ponies and bare tents, we were removed in a

twinkling to all the luxurious surroundings of a palace car and whisked over the remaining twenty miles of our journey at a rate of speed rarely attained by other than railroad officials.

This trip from Winnipeg to Qu'Appelle consumes ten days' time, which is a good deal in a short human life, but after all, it shows the traveler only a minute fraction of this vast prairie empire. The journey of 300 miles is only one-fourth of the whole distance from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, and the narrow strip of country traversed is a meagre sample from which to judge of the immense tract spreading from the American boundary to the Athabasca River. I have tried to supplement my own observations through inquiries of the conventional intelligent native; but it is not easy to get accurate information about this country beyond the limits of one's personal observation. The people who have traversed it are mainly traders, most of whom are ignorant half-breeds, and all of whom go through it with eyes closed to its agricultural capabilities. I have received absolutely contradictory reports of the country only a hundred miles from the line of my journey, and from the home of the persons making the statement. What I write is the mean of perhaps a dozen compared and analyzed reports. I have described the country on both sides of the Assinniboine as far west as Fort Ellice. The strip of fine country along the south bank from Ellice to Qu'Appelle reaches from twenty to fifty miles south, to the line of elevation named at different conspicuous points the Moose Mountain, the Weedy and Wolf Hills. Beyond these the great plain of the Souris, whose northern edge they form, stretches away southward to the American boundary. This plain is described as arid and treeless, but the experience of American settlers with similar plains in Dakota forbid the hasty conclusion that it is uninhabitable. Westward the same topographical condition prevails. The fertile strip south of the Qu'Appelle reaches nearly to the South Saskatchewan. Farther west the high plain to the south gradually invades it and narrows its width. The head waters of the Qu'Appelle are very near the great bend or elbow of the South Saskatchewan. Gen. Rosser, the Canadian Pacific chief engineer, has visited this point, and found the country sandy and barren. The bulk of the testimony is that the whole of the great plain on either side of the Sas-

saskatchewan, west of the elbow, is of the same dubious character as the Souris plain, but Mr. Tupper, Dominion Inspector of Telegraphs, insists that most of it is well watered and fertile.

West of this wide plain, lying north and south along the Rocky Mountain chain, is the region of the Bow and Belly Rivers, two tributaries of the Saskatchewan, a fertile, well-wooded and watered district, said to be admirably adapted to the raising of cattle. A good many ranches are already established there, and its conditions of climate and forage supply will soon be tested.

The most notable experiment in cattle raising in this region is about to be made by Mr. Cochrane, a well-known Ontario writer, who had just concluded arrangements with the Government for opening a ranch on Bow River. He has leased 36,000 acres of public land for twenty-one years, at a rate absolutely nominal, and is to secure ownership of one-fifth of it at a price almost so. He has purchased in Ontario, America and England several of the finest thoroughbred cattle and horses to be had for money. He is arranging to import 10,000 Montana cows and commence building on a large scale. He had not visited his future home when I was in Canada, though his stock was on the way; but he was confident from the result of his inquiries of the ultimate success of his venture. A good many less extensive and somewhat unauthorized experiments in cattle raising are said to be going on in Bow River country.

North of the Qu'Appelle the country has been more thoroughly explored and the sources of information are less doubtful. The triangle between the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle is traversed by several old Hudson Bay trails, and is pretty well known. It is fertile, well watered and has a good deal of timber along the streams and on the Touchwood Hills. Settlers are fast working towards this region, along the line of the Assiniboine. West of the Touchwood Hills the country does not seem to be so well known, but it has several considerable streams and lakes. Long Lake, northwest of Qu'Appelle, is sixty miles long, and, like the Fishing Lakes of Qu'Appelle, is the expansion of a small creek filling its excavated valley. The westward boundary of this region is the South Saskatchewan, which turns north from the elbow and runs parallel with and about fifty miles from the

north branch. Here we get out of the region of uncertainty again into the famous valley of the North Saskatchewan, known through a century's navigation of its broad stream, and whose fertility is a proverb. It seems to be the plan of the railway to skirt this Saskatchewan Valley, keeping as far to the south as possible. The trial line now surveying passes sixteen miles south of Qu'Appelle, and will probably touch the Qu'Appelle River near Long Lake, then keep on south of the South Saskatchewan to a point above the mouth of its affluent, the Red Deer River. Here it will cross the Saskatchewan, and strike directly through the fertile Bow River regions to the Rocky Mountains. The immediate objective point here is Fort Garry on the Bow River, about latitude fifty-one.

The very day of my return to Winnipeg an announcement was made there of great significance to the future of the Canadian Pacific Railway. At a meeting of the principal directors, it had been decided to order the survey of three very important branch lines. One of these, to be called the Souris branch, will leave the main line at Brandon, cross the intervening country to a point near the confluence of Pipestone Creek with the Souris River, thence pass up the Souris Valley to the 104th meridian. Another to be called the Assiniboine branch, will leave the main stem east of Brandon, strike northerly through the line of settlements on the north bank of the Assiniboine, and finally reach the Touchwood Hills, almost due north of Qu'Appelle. This will satisfy the clamor of the towns along the line of the old survey for railway communication. A third branch, to be called the Saskatchewan branch, will leave the main line some sixty miles west of Qu'Appelle, near the junction of Long Lake with the river, pass northwestwardly along the lake to the South Saskatchewan, which it will cross near the fifty-second parallel, thence through the entire length of the North Saskatchewan Valley through Battleford to Edmonton. I also learned, what everybody within the reach of newspapers learned three weeks before, that the Winnipeg city council had voted a bonus to the Southwestern branch of the Canadian Pacific, and that work had been at once begun upon a line running from Winnipeg southwest to the Pembina Mountain, thence westward to the Turtle Mountain, thus opening to the world the whole

belt of populous settlements along the American boundary. These branches will pretty thoroughly gridiron the country with railroads and occupy the field for a generation to come, to the exclusion of any other railway enterprise. It is a fact of some interest that the syndicate will have a land grant along all the branches. It seems that, though the railroad act does not make special provisions for a land grant to branches, it provides, in case the main line grant does not supply the requisite 25,000,000 acres, indemnity lands may be taken along branches. It is estimated that it will take all the lines whose survey has been ordered to make up the aggregate.

The Saskatchewan branch has the first absolute importance, since it will penetrate the famous fertile belt of the great river and open to settlement the choicest agricultural lands of the Northwest. The Souris branch has an immediate importance, however, second to no other, since it will penetrate the famous coal fields of the Souris. These promise the best coal in the Northwest Territory. I talked with two or three intelligent persons who had personally visited the Souris coal region, just north of the American boundary, and made a careful inspection of the coal formations. The country along the bank of the river is described as rocky and barren and unfit for agricultural purposes. The geological formation is cretaceous sand rock, rising on the banks of the river into abrupt cliffs worn by the action of water, wind and weather into a thousand picturesque and fantastic shapes. I picture to myself from the description something like the Missouri bad lands, with sand rock instead of clay buttes and without burnt coal or scoria. The coal strata are exposed on the banks of the river, and lie in two distinct groups. The upper group of strata, not far below the surface, are two or three feet thick, are simple lignite in constitution, and are clearly the same strata exposed in the Missouri bad lands. This coal is still considered of doubtful value, though industrious and enthusiastic experimenters in the United States are confident that they can contrive some form of furnace in which it may be burned successfully. The second series of coal strata, lying many feet below the first, is of a greater geologic age and more substantial character. It is still lignite, but consolidated by age and pressure, like the cretaceous coal of

Edmonton and British Columbia. My informant, Mr. Shaw of the Engineer Corps, made personal examination of one of these lower Souris beds lying near the level of the river, and cut through twelve feet of it before reaching the bottom. The coal lay between indurated clay strata resembling not very remotely the shales of the true coal measures. The Edmonton coal, which this so closely resembles, has been pronounced by practical experimenters well suited to all domestic and manufacturing purposes. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the Souris mines will be promptly developed, when the railway shall have opened a path to them, and that the coal, being distributed over the network of Canadian Pacific lines, will form a contribution of incalculable value to the treeless regions of the Northwestern plains.

